THE PEOPLE OF CEYLON

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THE PEOPLE OF CEYLON

BY

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COLOMBO

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY DEAR PARENTS
BUT FOR WHOSE LOVE OF THE VILLAGE THIS BOOK
COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN

PREFACE

It was five years ago that this book was written. Naturally, the subject matter in it is five years old today. But that should not in any way detract from its usefulness as very little appreciable change in the material, social and psychological elements of the people of Ceylon has taken place since then. I may, therefore, be pardoned if this book is published practically in its original form.

The book could not be published earlier owing to a number of reasons. I could not spare the time to see it through the Press. Then again printing was expensive. Consequently, Publishers were generally reluctant to accept any manuscript but that of a prescribed School Text. Fortunately for me Messrs. M. D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd. came to my aid and agreed to publish this book.

For quite another reason no attempt was made to bring the matter in this book up to date. I felt it better that this book should serve as a true record of the people of Ceylon prior to the time of their attainment of Independence after nearly 442 years of foreign domination. It must, however, be stated that very little real change—practically nothing—in the social organisation, cultural make up or mental disposition has so far resulted from the realisation of political freedom. Of course there has been no time for any change. In fact the transition from domination to Dominion has been unexpected and yet smooth.

Real change for better or for worse will eventually appear in the future. And this generation may or may not live to witness, enjoy or suffer it. The future alone can tell. It is my hope that when that real change ensues this book will serve as a record of the time when the political crisis took place. It will serve another purpose and that is to preserve the traditional lore about the Island and its people.

I must, perforce, make a few acknowledgements. I must thank Mr. A. G. Ranasinha, C.B.E., C.M.G., Superintendent of Census, now Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, but for whose kindness I should, probably, never have returned to and remained in the Island. I am grateful to Messrs. M. D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd. for readily undertaking to publish this book. My thanks are also due to Mr. P. W. Fernando of the Printing Department, Gunasena

& Co. for the immense trouble he took in seeing the book through the Press. I must thank Mr. U. G. P. de Mel, Deputy Director of Census and Statistics, for so willingly reading through the entire manuscript and helping with his very useful suggestions ; and Mr. Julius de Lanerolle for sparing the time to write a Foreword. Not the least of my acknowledgements are due to Mr. Geo. A. Koch for allowing me to reproduce these photographs in this and future editions ; to Mr. Lyn de Fonseka and Mr. A. B. C. Fernando of the Colombo Museum Library for gladly serving me at all times with books on Ceylon.

N. D. WIJESEKERA.

22nd December, 1949,
Deal Place, Colombo 3,
Ceylon.

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FOREWORD

The present volume owes its origin to the now forgotten Ethnological Survey which was conducted by the late Lt.-Commander J. R. de La H. Marett in close association with the author, Dr. N. D. Wijesekera. Marett and Wijesekera will always be remembered as the first two pioneers to undertake ethnological research in this country on an island-wide basis, while the credit for introducing scientific methods in limited spheres will of course go to the Sarasins and Seligmann.

Written manifestly for popular use, this book is in no sense a scientific disquisition. Nor is it claimed to be anything more than a collection of field notes hurriedly made by the author during his numerous research expeditions. Even as such, it is a most welcome publication, because nobody seems to be in a position to say whether a systematized account of the materials accruing from the official survey will ever see the light of day. To those who have been eagerly waiting all these years to see the results of the first Ethnological Survey of Ceylon, this collection of basic materials can hardly fail to be of some interest. To those, like myself, who have had the opportunity of playing some part, however small, in a movement that ultimately resulted in the Government accepting responsibility for ethnological research in Ceylon, it is no small satisfaction to see the enormous wealth of information brought together in this book—easily the first of its kind ever produced in Ceylon. And that is why I make no apology for accepting Dr. Wijesekera's invitation to write this Foreword.

Some fifteen years ago, when the Ministry of Education appointed a sub-committee to re-organize the Colombo Museum, its quondam Director, Mr. A. H. Malpas, requested me to submit a Memorandum on the Oriental Library and the Ethnological Section of the Museum, which I gladly undertook to do. My Memorandum was eventually placed before the sub-committee at a meeting held on 9 March 1934. I was later summoned by the Hon. the Minister of Education for personal consultation as well. I stressed, among other things, the importance of setting up an Ethnological Survey, if the objects exhibited in the Museum were not to remain for ever a meaningless collection of curios. On this point I wrote as follows :—

"There is, no doubt, a fairly extensive collection of objects in what may be called the 'ethnological section' of the Colombo Museum. But that collection can by no means be called rich. Nor can it be regarded as designed to help the work of a practical ethnologist any more than a collection of curiosities exhibited for amusement. There are specimens of arts and crafts, arms and weapons, coins and ornaments, masks and statues, furniture and kitchen utensils, swords and knives, and a host of other things. But, together with them, the necessary bits of information regarding their history have not been gathered; the necessary data as regards their relation to the development of Ceylon's culture have not been collected either. This, it must however be granted, has been the state of all museum collections until the end of the 19th century, when systematic study of ethnological objects was first begun in connection with the Pitt-Rivers Museums at Oxford and Farnham and the United States National Museum. What is now deposited in the Colombo Museum can undoubtedly be taken as a splendid nucleus for the formation of a good, workable collection. What is necessary, first and foremost, is to explore the whole country and to collect all the available information and objects. The fresh collections so made should then be systematized along with the old ones already in the Museum."

Hand in hand with the above, there were various other studies which it was necessary to undertake in order to make the Survey a fairly comprehensive one. And, after referring to the systematic work that was being done by the experts of the Archaeological Department, I proceeded to specify a few more of them in brief outline:

"There is also a considerable amount of information regarding folk-lore etc. recorded—though by no means exhaustively—by a number of systematic writers; but, unfortunately, no proper conclusions have yet been drawn from them and no hypotheses have been built on them in accordance with scientific principles. Since the intelligent study of folk-lore was begun in Germany by the brothers Grimm, it has now developed into a science. If our folk-lore, too, is studied in the light of this new science, it is bound to solve many a difficult problem relating to the ancient culture of Ceylon."

The relics of ancient arts, crafts, industries etc., found almost everywhere in Ceylon, have never been sufficiently or scientifically examined.

"Experience has shown that a philological examination of the Sinhalese language and the place-names of Ceylon should shed a wealth of light on ethnological problems; but this was begun in earnest only the other day.

"The Sinhalese literature is a veritable mine of information regarding the ancient culture of this country; but it has never been examined from an ethnological point of view, except, perhaps, for a few works on demonology written by one or two European scholars.

"There are hundreds of old games, sports, amusements etc. that are now fast dying out; and the fate of many old customs, manners, habits and magico-religious practices is also much the same. There is a good deal of tradition still preserved among the people in rural districts. With the passing of these old men and women all that information will be lost—information on which will depend the understanding and interpretation of most of the available data. Unless immediate steps are taken to collect all such information, and that on proper lines, a culture that endured for well over two thousand years in this country will die out within the next fifty years or so, leaving no trace of it for the coming generations to know. It would be a great pity if we allowed it to disappear without at least making an attempt to understand and record its essential features for the benefit not only of our own posterity but also of modern international scholarship."

I suggested that the whole undertaking should be left in the hands of a specialist, urging at the same time the importance of his having the ability not only to appreciate and understand the traditions, customs and habits of the people, but also to gather correct information from the unsophisticated peasants. I had also to point out how unsafe it would be for a specialist to depend on information recorded by certain earlier writers who were mostly amateurs and whose object was for the most part to provide amusement to their readers. In this connection I even quoted from no less a writer than John Ferguson (*Ceylon in* 1903) who had said that "in the District of Matara it was the custom to expose old and helpless human beings in the jungle, each with a bowl of rice and chatty of water, to die without troubling their relations, or to be devoured, as was often the case, by beasts of prey."

I have referred to these circumstances because they serve to depict a true picture of the otherwise obscure background so essential to the proper appreciation of a work like Dr. Wijesekera's, and have quoted at this length from my own Memorandum because it happens to be useful information available nowhere else. And, what is more,

it also affords an example of our Government's readiness to promote cultural studies and research in the country, whatever the ultimate success.

It is unnecessary for me to enter here into a discussion of Dr. Wijesekera's conclusions most of which are only tentative for the present. He has covered a very wide range and has, in the true spirit of a pioneer with a thorough knowledge of scientific methods, noted all details relevant to his subject. As a reliable source-book his work is indispensable to all research workers in this particular field and will remain so for many long years to come.

JULIUS DE LANEROLLE

Colombo,
December 25, 1949.

INTRODUCTION

This book will be incomplete, if published without the context of events that provoked its creation; and out of true perspective, if presented to the readers shorn of its melancholy background. But for these painful factors it would never have seen the light of day. I may therefore be pardoned if the mere events are recounted here to remain as a permanent record. My resignation from Government service was forced by circumstances. My being thrown out of employment was its direct consequence. This led to my leaving, even temporarily, all that was dear and near to me. I decided to spend the first stage of my exile in India where this book was written.

For precipitating the events need I not be grateful to the then Food Controller, who so insistently kept on refusing for two years to accede to my consistent request for release from the Chalmer's Granaries on grounds of ill-health ; to the Director of National Museums, who for reasons still unknown to me and perhaps well known to others refused to confirm me in the permanent post at the Colombo Museum, after seven years of service; and to the Government of Ceylon for so graciously accepting my resignation without the semblance of even curiosity? I doubt if they will ever accept my thanks. Nevertheless, I am constrained to think that they deserve some thanks from me, all the same.

To two other individuals also I am in duty bound to express my affectionate gratitude. To an infant in arms—my daughter; and to a young mother left in lonely reflections—my wife—I feel more than grateful not only for suffering the pain of parting precipitated by my action but also managing to subsist on the frugal bounty that could have been ill spared by the unemployed bread winner driven to academic exile, to do research at his own expense, at the Calcutta University, during a forced estrangement.

All the same it is comforting to record here that my stay in Calcutta afforded me the long awaited leisure and the pre-requisite mental disposition to undertake the writing of two books—viz: "Early Sinhalese Painting," and "The People of Ceylon" ; either of which could have been submitted as a thesis for the Doctorate of the Calcutta University. However, I chose the former for submission.

The latter I decided to publish almost immediately.

The idea to bring out a volume like this came to my mind almost immediately I started work with the Ethnological Survey of Ceylon conducted by Mr. J. R. de La H. Marett and myself. The results of that survey have been presented to the Museum authorities.[1] When that work was suspended half-way through I carried out investigations on my own. During such field inquiries, observations and investigations I learnt much that was new and also confirmed what I already knew. During this period Prof. Hooten invited me to be the guest of the Peabody Museum to help in publishing the ethnological data so carefully collected by both of us Mr. Marett and myself, and collated and prepared by me at the request of the Ceylon Government. Unfortunately I was not sent by the authorities though Dr. Marett, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, strongly recommended my going. In spite of further disappointment I continued with my work as best as I could. This book is the result.

Let me add a word about the book. Unlike a primitive or an advanced urban society the Sinhalese social organisation of the present day is a very complicated one, since it can neither be called urban nor primitive. There are no well defined, clear cut gradations between the different social strata since some of the cultural elements are synchronous with the ancient whilst others which form the bulk are so advanced as to be considered quite modern. Whilst the roots of the cultural tree have withered in some aspects some still provide sustenance and directing motive force. There are at least three Ceylons—Ceylon of the jungles, Ceylon of the villages, and Ceylon of the towns. To form a proper appreciation one is invariably constrained to study all three of them, for by such a coherent study alone can the facts be assessed at their true worth.

I have collected the material, of course, for over six years during many tours, pilgrimages, travels and primarily by living in the villages of Ceylon. I have visited nearly sixty points at remote rural areas spread throughout the Island of Ceylon. The present work therefore deals with the village as representative of the whole Island, although admit tedly there are varying elements of difference of a local and provincial nature between one village and another remotely separated.

It has been no easy task to devise a suitable method of arranging the facts in a systematic and coherent order. I do not suggest that I have been wholly successful in the arrangement. But I must say I have attempted to do the best. In this effort the suggestions of my research

1. I am informed that the data have not yet been sent for publication even in this year 1949, after ten years.

tutors in London and Cambridge have been most useful. I have kept prominently in view the works of Dr. J. H. Hutton, Mr. J. P. Mills and Prof. R. H. Lowie, I have attempted to touch upon every phase of living popular Sinhalese culture, point by point, with the main emphasis laid on the more important complexes, leading to the final impact with Western civilization. By no means is this record complete or comprehensive. There is ample scope for expansion and, may be, even for improvement. I shall welcome suggestions and corrections if any.

So far as I am aware no attempt has so far been made to write a treatise on the anthropology of the Sinhalese. It is indeed a long felt need. Not only will such a volume serve as a faithful record of the fast changing culture but also help to present sufficient data to outside students who badly need some convenient and ready work of reference. This therefore may, even in a modest way, be the first attempt in a field new to Ceylon.

N. D. WIJESEKERA

No. 4A, Bankim Chatterjee Street,
Calcutta, India,
19th February, 1945.

ERRATA

Page 1 line 20 for Totagala *read* " Totapola."
Page 15 line 24 last word should *read* " artifacts."
Page 30 foot note 1911 to *read* as 1921.
Page 55 line 19 desease to *read* as "disease."
Page 59 lines 17 & 18 for castes *read* " divisions."
Page 101 line 14 after the word agricultural *insert* " implements."
Page 102 line 31 the word liyadda should be within brackets.
Page 120 line 19 bawabuhutaya should *read* as " bahubhutaya."
Page 126 line 16 *insert* word " an " between and & iron.
Page 162 line 23 for head *read* " protector."
Page 165 foot note 1 after word Bhikshu *insert* "Thera" and " Maha Thera."

Page 181 lines 1 & 2 the word Brahamin to be *read* after Prince.
Page 181 foot note the word Raja to be *read* before Bamunu.
Page 181 line 8 after payment *insert* "other than the land held in service tenure."

Page 181 foot note 2. *add* at the end " This applies to the period after the Dutch occupation."

Page 182 line 8 *insert* after word in " all parts including."
Page 195 line 31 after fish *insert* " at the same meal."
Page 211 line 24 for two *read* " too."



1

SPACE

IF ONE were to remain above the peak of Pidurutalagala, the highest mountain of the Island of Ceylon, and look down on the land surface below one as if with an immense pair of eyes practically the size covering the Island one could easily observe three peneplanes, the 3rd at 6,000 feet above, the 2nd at 1,600 feet above and the first at 100 feet above the level of the sea. The luxuriant natural vegetation covering the hills, the thick jungles and woodlands of the planes and valleys would appear as a carpet of greenery cut here and there by the numerous clear, running, silvery streams that rush down the precipitous heights of the last plane. The barren sandy tracts fringed with swaying coconut palms raising their crowns above the stretch of lovely paddy fields indicate the belt of lowlands. The furlike soil teeming with a rich variety of life both animal and vegetable has been sustained by the abudance of rains and sunshine.

Remnants of land surfaces mostly in the shape of rocky peaks rise sheer from the surface of each of the planes. Largely isolated and deeply dissected examples of this feature may be closely seen in the rugged hilly country lying to the south-east and east of Badulla. Some of the prominent peaks that rise from the 3rd plane are Pidurutalagala 8,292 feet, Kirigalpotha 7,857 feet, Kolapatanahela 7,754 feet, Totagala 7,741 feet and Samanala[1] 7,360 feet.

The streams in the central valleys present an abundance of falls that drop beautifully in silvery showers. The stream to the north-east descends in a series of cascades. Bandarawela and Haputale lie in the 2nd depressed area. From the gap at Haputale the vast panorama to the south-east thrills with beauty and richness not only by the immensity of the extension but also by the steepness of the descent as far beyond as the sea near Hambantota.

In the belt of country lying to the east of the central planes are a series of isolated remnants in the form of ridges. Here and there rise from almost the level plain scattered fortress-like masses. Westminster

1. Still, John—*Spolia Zeylanica*. Vol. V, Pt. 18, 1908, p 80.

Abbey is one of them. The other is the mass near Moneragala. The same remarkable feature is presented in the region of Kurunegala where the summits of the long ridge of rock, from their shapes have come to be popularly associated with the names of animals.[1] The historic rock fortress of Sigiriya and the hill at Dambulla are further examples of this process of resistance to denudation.

Kandy itself lies in a depression in the 2nd plane. The summits of the intervening remnants of the plane assume flat-topped, wedge shaped forms. The gradual slope into the lowest plane is seen around the periphery of the 2nd plane in whose valleys may be seen the rich green paddy fields and palms.

The coastal lowlands of the maritime provinces appear as the outer circle consisting of flat country scattered with dry sandy tracts, low muddy fields and coconut plantations of the low plains fading almost imperceptibly into the deep blue sea encircling the Island of Lanka.

The geological structure of the Island consists of the following :—Archaean, Jurassic, Miocene, Pleistocene and recent residual and alluvial deposits. Regarding the pleistocene period which is of the highest interest to the prehistorian it would be interesting to quote Wayland: "Certain deposits lying on the surface of the gneisses of the coastal plane may be called Plateau Deposits. These consist of gravelly beds overlaid by red earth. These are not of marine origin. The upper red earth may be of wind-borne origin. These plateau deposits are widely distributed over the lower levels of the Island and they contain abundant chipped flints and worked remnants of quartz, the remains of Palaeolithic man and also the tools and weapons of the later Neolithic inhabitants of Ceylon."

The Miocene rocks are largely to be seen under the peninsula of Jaffna, and Minihagalkanda. The Tabbowa beds contain the development of the rocks of the Jurassic age. The ancient crystalline rocks of Ceylon are designated as archaean and they are the most primitive rocks of earth's history. These are commonly known as gneisses.

That the Sinhalese appear to have carried out iron industries is obvious from the material remains that are discovered from ancient sites. There are also certain legends which mention the hilly districts of Nuwara Eliya as iron smelting areas. Slag heaps marking the sites of ancient furnaces are also met with. The iron industry was carried on at Balangoda as late as 1904 but was unable to survive any longer

1. Modder, F. H.—*The Animal Shaped Rocks of Kurunegala.* J. R. A. S. Vol. XI, No. 40, 1890.

in the face of cheaper material from Europe.

The Sinhalese must have been making salt from very ancient times and it may have been one of the main local industries of the Island. Certain ancient routes[1] were also employed in transporting the commodity to the hill-country from the sea-coast. Puttalam and Hambantota are the main centres of the trade. During the Dutch times the Sinhalese kings remained at the mercy of the Dutch who held the coastal area. The ancient method is still employed in the primary stage of the manufacture that is by evaporation of the sea water in shallow lagoons. The salt pans (*levayam*) are under the control of Government which has a monopoly.[2] The curing and refining are done according to the modern scientific methods. It is a very fruitful source of revenue as well as an essential commodity.

Graphite commonly called plumbago was known from early times and in 1824 the mineral began to be commercially mined for export. The mining industry is even today in a very primitive stage the method employed being mechanical. Few of the larger mines are worked by modern machinery run by electricity. The risks and suffering faced by the early miners are alluded to in the songs[3] that are sung by the miners. Some of the more famous of the mines are those at Ragedera, Bogala, Dodangaslanda, Maduragoda, Meegahatenna and Hikkaduwa.

Lanka has a legendary reputation as the pearl of the orient and the jewel in the Indian Ocean. It maintains its reputation for gems although no pearls are collected regularly as of old. King Devanampiyatissa is recorded to have sent beautiful gems to Emperor Asoka of India.[4] The Greeks, Romans, Arabs and later traders may have sought these treasures during their expeditions.

The chief gem-producing areas of the present day are in the Sabaragamuwa Province and the Southern Province, the three chief centres being the Ratnapura, Rakwana and Balangoda. The gems may be obtained by straining the gravel pockets of rivers or sinking pits where such gravel deposits are to be found. The actual gems, however, are found concentrated in the layer of coarser gravel-like material (*illam*) underlying the alluvial deposits at a depth of five to twenty feet. Traditional methods are still employed in the industry which is con-

1. These tracks followed till very recent times may have been the ancient highways on which Prince Dutugemunu marched from Magama. See also Map. Brohier, R. L.—*Ancient Irrigati n*
2. Like Arrack only the Government has authority to make salt, store it and levy an excise duty. Government is also the wholesale seller.
3. Wijesekera, N. D.—*The Songs the Miners Sing*. *Ceylon Observer* for 16-12-41.
4. Geiger, W.—*Mahawamsa.*

sidered as the greatest business hazard[1] in which individual luck alone will reward the adventurer.

The Island has been formed by a series of periodic uplifts[2] of the earth's surface which afterwards became subject to erosion and denudation. These positive movements have also been punctuated by negative movements of subsidence. During recent years there have been in Ceylon a number of minor oscillations.

A number of hot water springs that have earned a reputation for their curative value are found in the Eastern and Southern Provinces. The more famous of these are at Kanniyai (near Trincomalie) *Unuwatura bubula* in the Vedda Country and near Tangalle and Hambantota. Although it is usual to connect them with volcanic activity their origin remains as yet unknown.

Temperature variations of a seasonal nature are hardly noticeable. Whatever changes are effected for shorter periods have been due to the winds and the physical lay of the land. This is at times considerable allowing a great variation of 29°F. at Nuwara Eliya in January to 89 °F. in the interior places. Generally the hill country is cooler seasonally and nocturnally, December nights being the coolest. Ceylon gets its rain mainly as a result of the bursting of the north-east and south-west monsoons. The former prevails during the months of December, January and February whilst the latter in June, July and August. The highlands benefit by rains during both seasons. On the lowlands of the north and the remaining dry zone areas very little rain falls. But, unless it is a period of extreme drought enough moisture is available sufficient to cover the surface with thick forests and rich verdure. " The striking scenery of the highlands and the wonderful colour of the sea as it rolls in on the long stretches of low palm-girt shore give to Ceylon its well-deserved reputation as one of the most beautiful islands of the world."

The economic produce contributing to the prosperity of the country has shifted from rice cultivation in the lowlands to the rubber and tea plantations of the uplands. The lowlands are not completely devoid of such plantations. Coconuts constitute the main economic plant of the low lands. The rich and poor alike own trees. The dry-zone which was once covered with smiling rice fields as a result of the wonder-

1. All mining must be risky if undertaken without scientific prospecting. The desire to gain sudden riches, it is true, has ruined many unwise men. Mere chance also has rewarded the blind prospector for gems or plumbago.

2. Lo mas, J.—*On the Origin of Adam's Bridge. Spolia Zeylanica*, Vol. II, Pt. 8, p 202.



A RIVER Maha-Veli-Ganga—*At Katugastota Bridge*



ful system of irrigation grows nothing, gets no rain, breeds malaria and regenerates half-starved peasants.

Sixteen rivers rising in the centre of the Island carry to the sea all the waters brought by the rains. The four chief rivers namely, Mahaveli, Kelani, Kalu, and Walawe ganga are the largest. The rivers at times rush down in torrents carrying away the bright red laterite clay from the slopes of the hills to the sea. The flat lands bordering the rivers benefit largely by the deposit of alluvium where rice, the staple food of the Sinhalese, is grown. Beneath the alluvium are found the gem bearing gravels.

The Island may be divided into the following zones :— Arid, Dry, Wet and Hill.

The stretch of country on the south-east and north-west sea coast of Lanka show sufficient material evidence of prehistoric human occupation. These are today sandy tracts devoid of vegetation and rain. Even the scattered plants that grow cluster together in isolated bushes.

The dry zone is characterised by wet periods for a part of the year. The tropical forests bearing tall trees interspersed with a thick undergrowth afford natural protection for dangerous animals like the elephant, leopard and sloth bear. Huge trees with thick barks and tiny leaves thrive here providing valuable timber—a source of income to Government. These are the areas of ancient civilization where the wonderful tanks and ruined cities still bear eloquent testimony to the glory of the historical past. Today desolation reigns supreme and the silence of the forest casts a peaceful spell broken only by the vigour of animal life. But still man has not abandoned the struggle to survive in these parts.

In the central and south-west regions of the Island lies the wet zone where tropical rain forests abound. The hand of the commercial exploiter has been responsible for a great deal of deforestation of some of these virgin forests. Nevertheless what may well be called a sole surviving relic of a tropical rain forest is to be witnessed in the Sinharaja Adaviya situate in the Province of Sabaragamuwa. This belt of natural vegetation has tall trees with broad foliage having leaves pointing downwards (drip edged). The temperature is high and the rainfall is heavy all throughout the year.

The Central hill zone contains the highland forests and patnas. Large trees abound in the forests and the European plants thrive. But the

1. A true relic of the primeval tropical forests is found stretching for 30 miles in a narrow strip to the south east.

patnas are grassy slopes of hills where nothing useful can be grown. Rhododendrons thrive in this area, confined mainly to the triangle within Nuwara Eliya, Bandarawela, and Badulla.

The abundance of rain that falls over the Island throughout the year ought to provide easy means of water transport. But owing to the hilly nature of the central highlands the precipitous falls make it impossible for boats to be taken very far into the interior. It is only on the first peneplane that boats of any size may be taken. In some instances and during certain seasons smaller craft may venture higher up the streams. Water transport[1] has been popular long before the arrival of the railway and the motor car. The Dutch Colonists of the 17th century attempted to connect the various trading centres along the rivers by constructing canals where barges and boats could be paddled. A nice net-work of canals connecting Galle, Kalutara, Colombo, Negombo, and Chilaw was established by them. Today very little use is made of this system of canals. Neglect and disrepair have blotted some out of recognition. Others remain stagnant pools reminding one of the ingenuity of a foreign ruler. The Sinhalese built-up boats and rafts still go up and down the main streams.

In the dry zone where vast acres of land once yielded rich crops one only sees desolation, neglect and dry fields grown fallow. The wonderful system of irrigation engineering and tank construction that made possible the cultivation of the fields around must be considered as a lost science. The ancient Sinhalese tapped the main rivers by building dams thereby diverting the water along artificial canals on to spacious tanks. The water was conserved in these reservoirs. The peasants were thus assured a regular annual supply of water for irrigating their fields. The jungle has superseded the fields. The tanks are stagnant pools breeding malarial mosquitoes.[2] Desolation has overcome the one time prosperous habitation of man.

1. The Dutch system of artificial waterways helped early transport considerably, although these were originally intended to bring the produce to their Colombo depots, these help even to this day.

2 Gill, Colonel.—*Ceylon Malaria Epidemic*. Sessional Paper 22 of 1935, p 64.

II

TIME

WHILST THE Archaeological Survey established by the Government of Ceylon in 1880 was energetically embarking on attempts at establishing its spheres of activity in linguistic and artistic research thereby reviving an interest in the ancient historic glory of Ceylon there were only a few who looked beyond the historical period into the pre-historic which at this time was more a name than any specific cultural division. It cannot be denied that the so called aboriginal tribes of the Veddas—the jungle tribes of the Island—aroused considerable interest solely from an ethnological or curio-hunting spirit. It is true that doubts were being cast on Vijaya and his landing in Ceylon. It is true that Yakkhas, Nagas Nitthevas and other mythological creations were considered as the only tribes living in the Island prior to the legendary invasion of Vijaya which is now accepted by most as a historical fact. Apart from such legendary references to Lanka as the mythical abode of Ravana—the ten-headed Yakkha chief who abducted Sita from India—no references to human occupation of this Island do occur. It never occurred to the people of this Island that any people civilised or not could have lived here. Besides the pundits of that time did not worry about them even if they had lived.

The beginning of pre-historic studies in the Island was the direct influence of the new movement started in Europe about fifty years ago. The scientists visiting the East evinced a keen interest in such studies. The Britisher who arrived in Ceylon after a period of University training in Europe considered the pursuit of historical research a duty as well as a hobby. The travelling amateurs also sought new fields of interest under the influence of European thought and beliefs. Among this batch of scientists could be included Government officers as well as the members of the planting community. Their daily work necessitated an outdoor existence, brought them in close contact with the jungles and the soil of the country and enabled them to benefit themselves as well as others from their powers of observation. The contribution made by such men to the list of discoveries is not too small. Here again

the majority of them were interested in the historical period.

Pre-historic man, cave man, or the man of the early periods of the Island was rapidly moving to the forefront of everyone's attention from the dim dismal darkness of his legendary existence. The belief was that such a creature did not exist at all. Such beliefs began to lose their conviction. The people were now beginning to accept his case as genuine. Therefore information of any relevance was being sought to be harnessed for the purpose of piecing together in all parts of the world as well as for the whole world the story of humanity. Even when such pieces of information were observed men began to be sceptical about their genuineness and remote antiquity.

Such a band of devotedly interested amateurs and scientific workers cared very little for the magnificient monumental edifices or literary evidence. They sought the relics of the past in the hills and plateaus, terraces and gravel beds, caves and open stations. The confirmation of such findings had to be obtained by a close study of the living Veddas. In fact the material evidence sought after was the imperishable stone implements by a close study of which one was able to gather a great deal of information about the men who used them. Such evidence could also be obtained by less perishable materials like bones of animals and human skeletal remains.

The material evidence so far obtained remain partly in the possession of the Colombo Museum and partly with private collectors. A connected account has yet to be written of all this scattered material. In attempting a treatise on the subject the present writer was prompted by two reasons. Firstly it was a desire to acquaint the readers with these matters and thereby arouse a keen interest in them. Secondly, it was the urgent necessity to record the existing facts and evidence in a simple manner so as to enable the research workers to be informed of the sources and the nature of the material hitherto discovered. The handicaps attendant on the writer have been numerous; nevertheless, that very fact has afforded the courage and perseverence to go through.

In a short historical review of this nature no one would be justified in failing to acknowledge the deep debt of all Pre-historians of Ceylon towards pioneers, like Messrs. Green and Pole who, incidentally were the first to recognize that quartz fragments of a type were the stone implements used by our early ancestors—the cave men of Ceylon. From Basle in Switzerland came the brothers doctors Sarasin whose indomitable courage and quest for knowledge were rewarded by the finding of much useful information revealed from the bosom of the

earth. They excavated a few caves in the areas of Kataragama and Bintenne, needless to say with considerable success. From that time Ceylon was added to the list of early home of man. The publication was carried out in 1908 in true scientific style. This together with the beautiful illustrations remain to this day the most authoritative document in the field of Ceylon Pre-history. In so far as the new movement received the backing of scientists like Dr. Seligmann and many other scholars the year 1908 was successful. Apart from compiling a monograph on the Veddas Dr. Seligmann undertook excavations, and published his information on the stone implements. J. Parsons wrote on the nature of the stone chert, quartz, etc. In the year 1913, J. Pole, a Matale planter published a beautifully illustrated book on the stone implements collected mostly from the hill districts of the Island. Meanwhile E. J. Wayland was travelling the length and breadth of the Island in search of stone age implements and information. Most of this search was undertaken on foot. By this means he was able to discover a number of implementiferous sites. Wayland treated the whole problem in a short article published in 1914.

Mr. Hartley, another collector, specialised on a certain section of the stone implements. He devoted time and attention on the pygmy tools made of quartz. In 1914 he also published a paper on the subject. These have been the chief publications up to then. There was little activity since then. The early fascination faded away in the course of time, reaching the culmination of disinterestedness during the world war 1914–18.

The sorry state of affairs prevailed for a considerable time. No outstanding scholar appeared to rouse from the lethargic state a pursuit that was once absorbing much interest from scholars, historians, amateur collectors and planters until the Government once again took the bold step of inaugurating an Ethnological Survey. The special officer J. R. de laH. Marett who was in charge of the Survey and the present writer did much spade work to revive an interest not only among the older generation but also among the more important sections of the population, namely, the teachers and college students. The response has been very encouraging. It is most gratifying to note that the Sinhalese-speaking and reading sections have participated in this response. A few others, too, are beginning to shew a great deal of interest. The Ethnological Survey was able to check up and go over

the ground covered by earlier writers and collectors. Furthermore, new fields of implement bearing cites have been discovered. It has, once more instilled life to a subject that is always interesting so long as man wishes to know more about himself through a study of his past. Since then Mr. and Mrs. Noone have done considerable work in collecting at Bandarawela and Diyatalawa. They have presented a fine collection to the Museum and published the material in the Journal of Science.[1]

To gain experience in field work and understand the subtle intricacies of field exploration and search one must be a field worker. One must go into the field and dig for oneself under the guidance and direction of trained men. A season of field work is worth ten times reading or arm-chair theorising. Any one of us can collect stones. But it requires a trained eye and experienced judgment to distinguish implements of stone from among naturally broken ones. To derive the maximum information from such implements one must collect them methodically or excavate them scientifically. The surface finds can be easily collected on exposed land surfaces, *patnas*, river beds, and gravel pits. The laterite surfaces exposed by the rain yield abundant crops of chert material some of which may have been used by man for chopping tools. Often the chert or quartz are found separate without any pottery. At least the caves excavated by Sarasins or Seligmann yielded no early pottery. Sometimes the exposed laterite or sandy surface yields a combination of chert quartz and pottery. In this case dating becomes confused. This was so in the sites in the vicinity of Pomparippu which area proved to be interesting. Such stone implements can be dug out of caves if they had at any time in the past been occupied. The actual digging must be carried out with great care, and until the stratigraphical co-relation is established between the implementiferous layers of caves and open stations all dating must remain conjectural and difficult.

A few caves have been dug up by Sarasins and Seligmann. The field notes of these efforts are not available for inspection in order to ascertain the different layers and their associated industries. A probable reconstruction of a trench dug in a cave by Seligmann has been attempted with the scanty material at the writer's disposal. What remains to be done is to try and obtain a few stratigraphical sequences from caves and open stations. This would supply a long-felt and much desired need.

1. Noone, H. V. V.—*Stone Implements of Bandarawela. Ceylon Journal of Science*, Vol. III, Pt. 7.

The stone implements of Ceylon are fashioned from chert (*gini-gal*), quartz (*tirivana-gal*), and rarely flint and jasper.

Chert is an impure siliceous rock containing Chalcedony and sometimes opaline silica stained with iron oxides. The Ceylon cherts are entirely inorganic in origin and may be described as silicified rocks. Their commonest shades are brown and red. Brown chert was used for gun-flints and strike-a-lights.

Quartz may be called silicon oxide. When pure it is colourless and transparent. In its impure state the colours range from white to black and the material is translucent. The conchoidal fracture set up when artificially struck, is quite noticeable. It is the most abundant mineral in Ceylon. Rose-coloured quartz is also common. The rounded and worn out pebbles are also quartz in material.

Flint is very rare. An isolated microlithic implement may have been fashioned from this material. A few nodules of iron pyrites have been discovered in hill districts specially in the Nuwara Eliya District. But as to whether early man smelted them it is difficult to maintain. Red and yellow ochre have been found in the open stations.

Wood must certainly have been used for tool making. The perishable nature of the material does not permit its preservation. That bone was employed is evidenced by such finds as points and needles. So far no pierced bone needle has been discovered. In all cases the bones selected were split strips. There is no reason to believe that the value of horn as a material for tool making had not been known. The writer is not in a position to say anything about horn-points, adzes, axes and handles. But the fact that dice, knife handles, points, etc., are fashioned out of this material by the Sinhalese today might suggest the probable early origin of the practice.

Tool Families.

The commonest material used by the stone age man for the manufacture of implements is stone. In Ceylon both chert and quartz have been employed. The process of manufacture appears quite simple. A lump of stone or a core is struck with another stone to produce a crude tool. Flakes are sometimes chipped off by striking. The technique of percussion is the commonest method employed by early man. The core itself is used in a crude form without much secondary working or trimming so much so that it is rather difficult to detect the human intention. These are the hammer stones, choppers and hand-axes.

There are then two series of stone implements. One is the series of core tools already mentioned above. The other is the flake series which

are made from pieces of stone (blades) struck off a main core. These may be called derived implements containing visible signs of secondary working on the edges. The edges may be touched up either for the purpose of getting a sharp cutting blade or for blunting to give a hand grip.

The presence of pebbles far removed from streams is itself evidence in favour of the theory that these have been removed by man. Such pebbles nicely rounded and smoothed are seen in river beds or gravel pits, laid down during floods. To find secondary workings on them is quite interesting. And when these pebbles are found in caves in the highland areas their authenticity as tools need not be doubted. Some of the pebbles have been used as hammers or weights but the majority of them are chipped on one or both sides to produce a chisel edge.

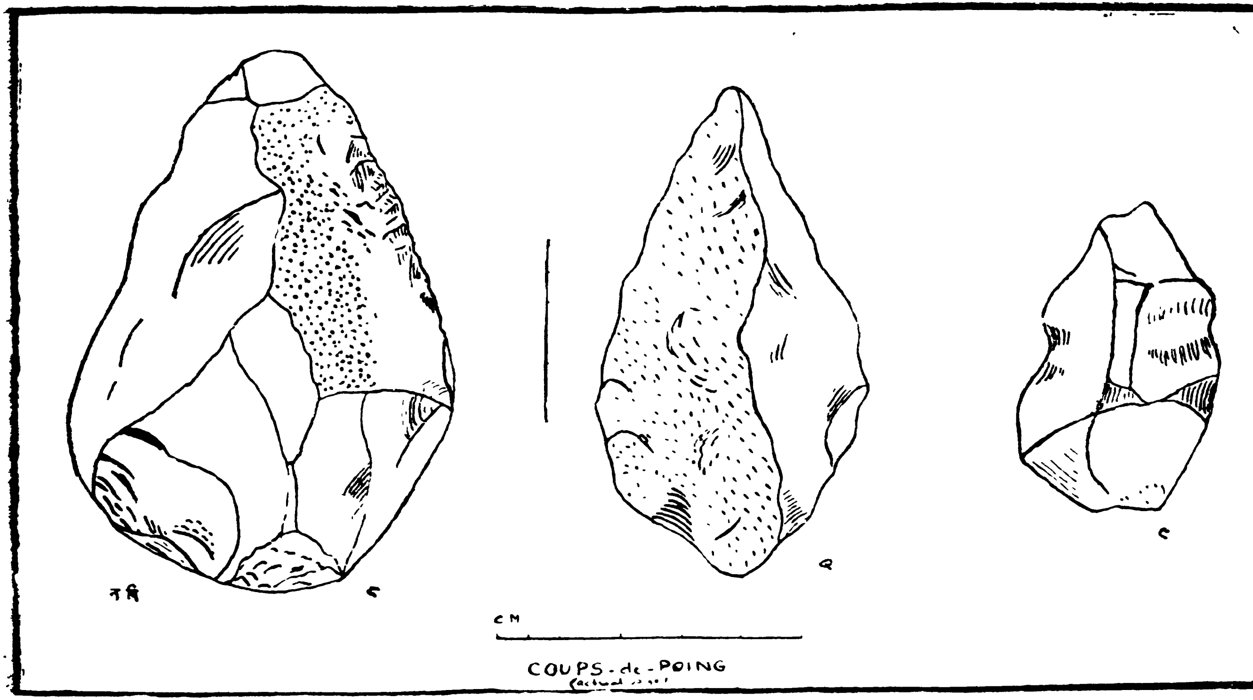
Very few bone and horn tools have been, so far, discovered. A few bone points suggest an industry of this material.

Cores

These are mere lumps of stone from which blades have been chipped. Not all blocks of stone have been subjected to any treatment. But those that have been made use of show the manner in which flakes have been struck off. It is obvious that these were not used as tools since no trace of secondary working can be noticed. The appearance of a bulb at the point of percussion proves the striking off of such flakes. The grooves that follow from such a point of contact when compared with some of the flake tools confirm one's belief in the cores as sources of blades.

Hammerstones

Any stone that offers a good grip may be utilised as a hammer. In fact any stone picked up at random would suffice for a missile that could be thrown at bird, beast and man. But in the case of weights an essential requirement is a uniform size and regular shape. It must be admitted that ancient men used stones for a variety of purposes as is done even by most of us today. Apart from such conjectural generalization it could be said that such stones as have been used as hammers do shew on the surface a few cracks, holes and chippings thereby testifying to their having been once used. The actual manner of their use cannot be expressed but best left to be imagined. Some of the strips of stone may have been fabricators. As everyone knows this type of tool can be put to a multitude of uses. Its special use is in connection with the timber industry.



STONE ARTIFACTS—*Large Series*

Rough Hand Axes

Although lacking in symmetry or beauty secondary working or definite shape, the examples tend to show a stage of evolution in this series which forms a collection of very useful stone objects. Generally speaking a large core is in such cases worked into a triangular shape. The point or the basal edge may have been the functional end. Traces of trimming may be detected in some instances. Their chief function was chopping and digging.

Hand Axes (Coups-de-poing)

By chipping a lump of chert or quartz a beautiful egg-shaped core tool could be obtained. It is a common artifact in stone age industries. The depth of the stone varies but in most cases the depth varies in proportion to the height. Since the stone fits into the hand so nicely one has got to try and use it to feel the grip. The shape itself presupposes a variety of functions. It is the stage of a further process of evolution. The comparative smallness of size and increased secondary working confirm this as also the fact that the actual business end at this period was the apex. In the larger specimens the solid sharpness and the massive resistance are the advantageous features of a hand axe. That itself speaks for its popularity and hence its persistant appearance in all parts of the world.

Discs

A discoidal artifact may be fashioned from a core or flake. The majority of our finds are made of cores, the material being chert. The shape is round or usually multi-sided. The convex irregular edges are the result of intentional chipping and flaking of both faces. These also may have served as hammers or choppers.

Pebbles

The pebbles which preserve signs of being worked by human hand have been discovered in the river gravels, open stations and even caves. The pebble selected for the purpose of converting into a tool is in the majority of cases an ovaloid, finely worn out mass of quartz of a size averaging 4 to 6 c.m. Seldom is it that the true identity is completely obliterated by chipping and trimming. The pebble is worked on the longer axis by flaking it on a side, the idea being the realization of a sharp edge that could be conveniently used between the fingers. It would be convenient to have the edge opposite the business end blunted or smoothed so as to be used conveniently. Whenever a pebble is worked on both faces the invariable result is the production of a chisel

edge which with the supporting material behind and the smooth blunt back could be utilised to do hard work.

Scrapers

With the passage of time the popularity of the flake industry began to increase. The saving of material, the convenience of trimming and adaptability may have contributed to the development. Further men began to realize the advantages of a composite tool. The lightness of such an instrument favoured its suitability in mechanical propulsion. Then we notice the appearance of worked flakes in a variety of shapes. The beauty of the tools began to be enhanced. Such flakes are at times worked on one side, sometimes on both. In all cases the cutting edge can be detected. The scrapers may be conveniently grouped into three types, viz., scrapers, hollow scrapers and round scrapers. All three types are found here. When properly fashioned they are effective little specimens with a singular beauty of their own. Each type was used according to the requirements of the occasion.

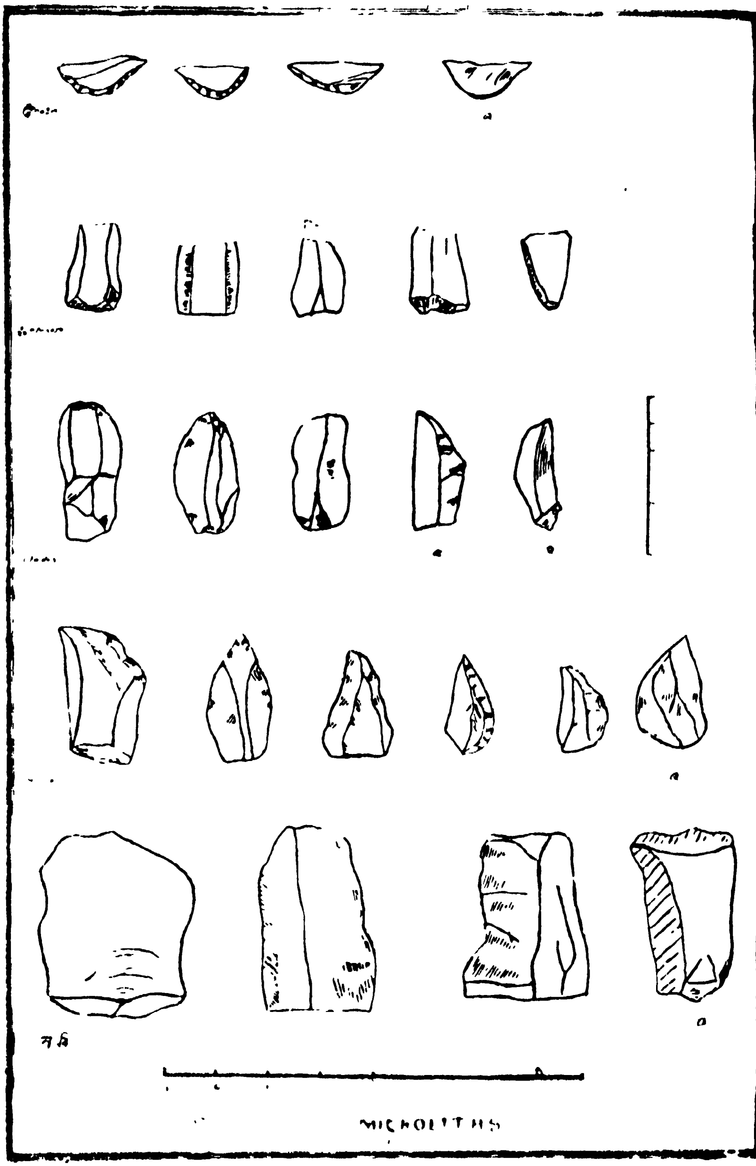
Points

A large number of pointed flakes have been found almost at every point where a search has been made. The point is obtained by beautifully trimming the sides. Possibly they were used for piercing skins. The flatness coupled with the leaf-shaped appearance probably suggests that the straight pointed flakes may have been used as tips of arrows, javelins, knives or throwing weapons.

Beaked Points

Fashioned from a blade by a series of beautiful trimmings on a side or flaking a face the beaked points may have served in skinning game or engraving on stone and wood. The actual size of this series varies. But the very fact of smallness contributed to their effectiveness.

Another series of stone implements popularly known as pygmies by reason of their extremely small size is also found in the Island. The material mainly used in their manufacture is quartz, but chert is also used. It is the opinion among pre-historians that this was the last phase of the stone age cultures which every civilization propbably passed through in turn. The pygmy tools belong to the neolithic period when agriculture, pottery making, grinding and polishing of tools were practised by man. The fact that the pygmy series comes last in the stratigraphical series also adds weight to such a belief. Therefore, time was not long when these tools were used in various countries. The



STONE ARTIFACTS—*Pygmy Series*

antiquity and duration of this period varies in different countries. It is quite probable that primitive man belonging to the microlithic culture might have been a contemporary of higher civilizations in other countries or even in the same country. In India and Ceylon such a state of affairs may have prevailed. The Veddas of Ceylon are likely to have used such tools until quite recent times.

The composite character of such tools becomes obvious by a mere examination of the examples when drawn to actual size. These could have been used for knives, cutters, arrow-heads, points and needles. Similar examples shown by Drs. Sarasin compel one to think that some could have been used as chisel blades (*petits tranchets*) or small axes. According to their shapes these tools have been described as lunates, crescents, trapezoids, leaf blades and points.

Bones and Shells

The only scientific material available on this subject has been published by Drs. Sarasin in their work[1] on the stone age of Ceylon. The specimens can be seen from this volume.[1] A large variety of bone tools is possible but only the small and large points have so far been discovered. These could have been used as arrow points or awls but not as needles since none of them shows an eye. The interesting point is that these have been found and it is quite likely that other bone artifacts such as harpoons, fish hooks and needles may be found together with carved material.

A number of snail shells regularly pierced at a certain point form a very interesting collection. It is doubtful whether these were artfactsi at all. The possibility that these are natural openings resulting from a particular weakness at this very point must not be brushed aside. According to Roth the pierced shells have been used as scrapers as is done by the native people of Queensland today. Could these have been so pierced as to be worn in a string round the waist and neck ? That they have been used as arrow straighteners is only a remote possibility since the very brittle nature of the material precludes such a function.

Ochre

Seldom is ochre found in large quantities. Actually it has not been found in caves. A few pieces have been picked up in the open stations. Red and yellow are the two colours found. Of these the yellow material is soft whilst the red is hard. Some pieces show definite signs of waste. How they were used, by whom, where and when are questions that

1. Sarasin, Drs.—*Steinzeit auf Zeylan*, 1908

remain to be answered.

Primitive man most certainly used implements for offensive, defensive and utilitarian purposes, since the days of his emergence from the animal stage. An ape which uses a stick lying close at hand in order to reach a banana or morsel of food expresses the instinctive tendency to resort to mechanical assistance. The early ancestors of *homo sapiens* himself started by using sticks and stones for throwing at persons or things. That wood was largely employed in the service of man from the very beginning of the dawn of humanity must certainly be accepted even though no material evidence could ever be hoped for. What would be preserved are stones and such other hard material.

As to the period when man began the use of stone implements the majority of scholars seem to agree on a rough estimate of 100,000 years. But these rough stones commonly known as eoliths do not seem to be very convincing. It was the next series that have convinced the pre-historians. This period may have started about 50,000 years ago and is called the palaeolithic age. The old stone age continued until about 10,000. Then followed a period of inactivity and powerful climatic changes leading to the neolithic period or the new stone age which may truly be called the starting point of the Modern Civilizations. The discoveries obtained during these times completely revolutionised the life of man and laid the foundations of a settled community life, social organisation, economic sufficiency and methods of obtaining and consuming food. No one should be misled by the dates given in round numbers. They serve as landmarks and aids to memory. Further the rough chronology that has been tested and established for European pre-history need not necessarily apply to the tropical east. A similarity of tools alone would not testify a correlation merely for comparative purposes. One should if possible try to correlate local industries with those found elsewhere.

The study of implements not only teaches about the mechanical progress and technical attainments but also gives an insight into the mind of manufacturers. The material remains are the repositories of ideas that prompt the transformation. Human movements can be followed by studying the embodiment of different ideas. The outward shape is nothing; but the inward thought that was crying for form and shape in the mind of man was everything. Luckily for the present generation its ancestor selected stone as his medium. Certainly it was a good thing from which at least a few hints could be gleaned regarding early man.

A process of trial and error taught pre-historic man the proper use of suitable stone for the purpose of manufacturing tools. The desired shapes had to be obtained by percussion and chipping. The hammer stones may have been used in such a task. Thus, there grew up a regular technique which developed as time went on. The natural sequel to this technique would be two series of implements. The first is where the actual solid mass of stone of suitable size was made use of, the second is where flakes or strips were chipped off. There is reason to believe that both the core and flake industries were employed at the same time for different purposes on different occasions. Hitting, chopping or hammering could be undertaken with a core tool whilst scraping, piercing and engraving can best be done with a flake. There is another reason for the appearance of larger, cruder or less worked tools during the earlier pre-historic periods when less experience and want of ingenuity left no alternative but the use of crude weapons both for offence and defence. The passage of time led to an improvement in technique and variety of types. On the whole much better, sharper and lighter implements began to be evolved.

A descriptive account of the separate tool families has been given earlier. No one for a moment accepts that every broken stone found on the *patnas* or sandy tracks of Ceylon has been used by man. It is not so. Human action could have produced flakes, but not every flake is a tool. The dumps of broken stones were mere workshops at which the regular implements were made. The artifact was both a work of art and a weapon useful and indispensable. A great deal of labour, concentration and care has to be spent in its making. It must not be expected that after all that trouble taken in making tools any man would scatter them about to be kicked by his succeeding generations. The seemingly queer meaningless objects which pre-historians accept as artifacts fail to be so convincing in the eyes of average people. The writer has often been at pains in convincing some of his more intelligent friends about their genuineness. His friends have rejected the explanation as a mere figment of his fertile imagination. The fault lies mainly in our poor collections. The rarity of convincing specimens is also a contributory cause.

The task of convincing the learned and the others could be greatly facilitated if it is possible to obtain genuine photographs of these implements *in situ* during the various stages of excavation. The material remains discovered in caves and open sites have helped

considerably to establish the position and status of men of the stone age in Ceylon. What remains to be done is to show the contemporaneity of the stone tools with those men.

Since chert and quartz have been found to be the best material in the manufacture of tools it may be useful to know how one could fashion an implement from a core. When a core of chert is dealt a blow with another hard stone a conchoidal fracture results leaving at the point of impact a bulbular protrusion. This truncated nipple is called the bulb of percussion. By holding a core or flake horizontally and striking blows vertically at right angles the edges could be trimmed to produce a sharp edge. Any edge that could be used for cutting, scraping or engraving is called the working end or business end. It is by this process of secondary flaking that a tool is definitely shaped. Such intentional blows must be clearly and carefully distinguished from the natural fracture resulting from natural movement or action. Nature can flake a piece of stone in one direction or many directions but what it cannot do is to chip a piece of chert or quartz in one direction then turn it at right angles and repeat the process, and then again turn it more or less at right angles and trim an edge. This process involves the control of the human will.[1] Hence by percussion or flaking under control or pressure stones were converted to instruments for scraping, cutting, piercing, etc. These foregoing factors are the main criteria in judging the genuineness of stone that is suspected as an implement of pre-historic man.

With the passage of time the technique of manufacture improved. The size wherever possible was reduced. The effectiveness of a small tool began to be realised. The smallness and fragility were eliminated by hafting the stones to wood, bone or horn. Such composite tools have been discovered in such circumstances as to suggest their shapes and the method of hafting for obtaining knives, saws, arrow-points. In most cases only the stone portion of this composite series has been found. These are so small that they have come to be called Microliths or pygmy implements.

In speaking of the Ceylon stone implements E. J. Weyland thought it convenient to group them into two series in accordance with the size and material. The large chert-implements of the plateau-deposits and the smaller quartz implements of the hill districts formed the two series. Apart from the convenience afforded by such a division no

1. Burkitt, M. C.—*The Old Stone Age*, p 45.

scientific value may be attached to it. It must be admitted that the lowland deposits have yielded more chert implements belonging to the larger series whilst the upland *patnas* contain the smaller quartz implements. This is not exclusively the case. Both series made out of both materials have been found in association with burnt pottery on the surface of the sandy tracts of Pomparippu.

As far as Ceylon is concerned the material remains so essential in the reconstruction of the past are very scanty with the result that very little information regarding our ancestors has come to light. Some of the useful evidence is hidden away in private collections. Some of the sources of information may be unreliable. The problem of man's origin in Ceylon and his entry into Ceylon remains yet to be solved. The solution to this depends on a knowledge of the geology and climate of India and Ceylon in the past. It is the belief among pre-historians that man did not evolve in Ceylon but on the other hand that he arrived in the Island from the main continent of India during some remote period in the past. No skeletal remains of pre-historic man have come to light. One still hopes that some day a skull or part of a skeleton will turn up.

If it is assumed that man migrated from India, it must follow that contemporaneous Indian and Ceylon pre-historic peoples should have striking points of similarity not only in physical form but also in social organisation. The two peoples would have followed the same technique of stone flaking. The customs, beliefs, arts and crafts would also have had a common source. Most of this material has been irretrievably lost. Even assuming that man in Ceylon is at least 100,000 years old the change of environment fluctuated by difference of climate should affect him as well. Pluvial periods were interrupted by warm ones. At times cold seasons gave way to warmer ones. Laterite formation was the result of such Pluvial periods followed by warmer drier intervals. Tropical rain forests flourished under such wet conditions. The luxuriant vegetation and thickness of growth provided a natural home for tribes of jungle folk to settle down where food and water were so plentiful.

That men of the primitive times lived in caves and tropical forests must not be taken to mean that their permanent home was a cave or the forest. It was not so. Man never lived in the recesses of dark caves hidden away from the light of the world nor did he seclude himself in sylvan solitudes. He preferred the mouths of caves or rock shelters situate on the sunny side of hills. Living in the interior was unhealthy

and fraught with danger from man and beast. Both for protection and defence the mouth was preferred. Being a hunter primitive man constantly thought of game and the convenience of observing the movements of animals below was also there. The fact that pre-historic man occupied the mouths of caves is borne out by the very fact that it is at the cave mouth that the occupation layers seem to be crowded.

In Ceylon we have unmistakable evidence to show that man utilised caves, rock-shelters and jungles for his habitation. The few caves that were dug by Seligmann prove this beyond doubt by the discovery of relics of the past. The modern Veddas who still live in caves and jungles prove this for the present. The artifacts that he has dropped, the food that he has thrown about, the crude paintings that he has attempted prove this beyond any doubt. When such remains are found in association with charcoal, bone and ash in the same layers the facts appear real.

Men of ancient Ceylon spent a greater part of their time in the open. Even when they were in occupation of a cave or hut it was the women and children who remained within. The men slept out as they sleep out among the Vedda community today. Where natural caves were not available the families took shelter under trees or improvised leaf huts. The hut was small dark and smoky within. The site selected was one that was naturally defended. Bark and wooden huts began to take the place of leaf-thatched shelters. As time went on even mud walls began to be set up. In order to keep off beasts and men the hut had to be surrounded with a fence. This was strongly made of wood. Primitive man wandered from place to place in search of food, novelty and adventure. Seasonal occupations encouraged such a practice. Invasions and wars compelled such a course of action. In fact a section of the people could not have been much different from the Ahikuntakayas and Rodiyas of today.

That a fair portion of the country was occupied by these men of the stone age becomes clear by a glance at a distribution map of stone age implements. Either the groups settled down at the sites marked or they migrated from place to place. Also at some phase or other (the latest phase) the highlands were occupied by men. The quartz microliths are found up to a height of 6,000 feet. How did the cold effect him? Did he wear warm furred skin clothing ? Man did not make the cold hill-country his permanent and settled home. In his seasonal migratory expeditions both in search of food and escape from the heat

he was obliged to spend a part of his time. The same series of tools are found both in the upland and lowlands. The quartz pygmies so far believed to be restricted to the hills have been found by the writer in the Pomparippu area not in isolation but in association with cherts and pottery. In caves one often finds quartz.

Ancient men did not live by hunting only. Fishing, collecting and gathering relieved them of the monotony of a meat diet. Hunting was also a seasonal activity. When the animals had migrated or became scarce collecting helped to supplement the larder. Further, men had to wander far and wide to track game. It is true that the knowledge of the jungle and the movements of the animals lightened their burden but still many a day the hunter returned empty handed in disappointment. The women played a useful part in collecting and when the men were out hunting, the women roamed the neighbouring jungles in search of fruits, roots, insects and honey. Men, women and children contributed to the economic self-sufficiency of the family and the tribe.

Most of the implements owe their origin to the need for the food-quest. That being the prime motive of man's early existence his whole time, interest and energy were devoted to that end. Crude stones and wooden clubs came in handy and could have been found in any part of the Island. But for the purposes of cutting, piercing and scraping a sharper and more delicate instrument was essential. Such a tool was fashioned from the flaked stones. Pits dug in the ground, traps laid at strategic points, nets set up under cover and many another device sufficed to enable man to obtain enough food. It was certainly the bow and arrow that ensured his success in the chase. The nature of the thick jungle which permitted a near approach to one's prey contributed mainly to his success. The bow and arrow were made of wood. With the knowledge of stone manufacture and composite structure of weapons portions of wood began to be replaced or strengthened with stone, arrow-tips being a case in point.

Other mechanical devices were also employed by pre-historic man. The blow tube or blow gun could have been most advantageously used in killing birds by means of poisoned arrows. It is used in many parts of the world and in the Ratnapura District of Ceylon small birds used to be killed by such means. The pellet bow and stone sling may have been used and known.[1]

Fire making was known to all ancient men except those of the Andaman Islands. The Veddas of today employ one of the oldest

1. A few good specimens can be seen at the Colombo Museum.

techniques in the bow-drill method in obtaining fire. That the use of fire was known is quite clear from the amount of charcoal that turns up during cave excavations. Did the fires serve for protection, warmth or cooking or for all three. As a matter of fact no pot-boilers, or hearth stones have been dug up. Cooking as is practised today was unknown to primitive men. Few foods were actually cooked in vessels. The meat may have been roasted or broiled over a fire. Roots and yams may have been baked under hot ash.

The development of the culinary art was the direct result of the knowledge of pottery. Pottery helped to maintain a cleaner home. The clay vessels provided a surface for artistic expression and a means of improving food by cooking. Hence the knowledge of pottery making is considred one of the basic factors of modern civilization. The last phase of the stone age known as the neolithic age brought about this invention. The time factor varies according to each country and culture.

The Primitive folk partook of all foods except those that were tabooed for special reasons. Just as flesh was obtained by hunting, fish was caught by a variety of methods. Ceylon rivers abound in fish nor is it difficult to catch them. Apart from nets, traps, hooks and other mechanical means the primitive man knew and still knows the efficacy of certain poisonous herbs, leaves and barks, that, when thrown into the water, stupefy the fish. The Veddas use this method even at the present day.

Pre-historic man being used to a nomadic existence would not have found any interest in settled economic pursuits like agriculture and domestication of animals. There can be no doubt that he benefited by certain natural products and even had tamed animals. But deliberate cultivation and breeding animals in captivity are features of neolithic culture. The primitive form of agriculture practised by the Veddas and peasants of the Island is in certain cases so primitive that it to be really called cultivation is a misnomer. This form of clearing a bit of the jungle for a season or two and sowing some hardy crops like Kurakkan could have been introduced by the Australoid element of the Vedda population whilst the wet cultivation of the Sinhalese may have been later introduced by the Mediterranean folk. terraced cultivation may have come from the Eastern Archipelago and Indonesia.

The earliest and most primitive manner of getting food was by wandering in the jungle and woods. Being a less dangerous vocation

both women and children were able to contribute their effort in assuring economic sufficiency for the family. The roots and fruits relieved the monotony of the daily diet. The herbs and medicinal plants helped them in illness. The roots were eaten either raw or baked under ash or roasted over a fire. Honey formed an important addition to the diet of pre-historic men of Ceylon. The art of honey gathering was a feat of nerve carried out under strict ritual observance. Leaving the more dangerous methods aside as work of specialists the ordinary man of the community could have gathered honey from the hives of the less dangerous bees.

Man in the tropics required very little clothing to keep him warm. Nevertheless other considerations greatly influenced wearing of personal ornaments, clothing and decorative dress. Sense of charm was one but not the most important. However, from the Archaeological evidence available very little can be inferred concerning the dress of our early ancestors. No beads, bone or definite shell ornaments, no proper needles or awls have so far been discovered in actual field operations either in caves or on open sites. The few bone points that have turned up do not provide any appreciable knowledge to solve this problem. For the present imagination alone must fill the gap. Barks of trees, leaves of plants, and skins of animals may have been used for warmth and protection. What other embellishments like colours, feathers, headdresses were used cannot even be conjectured. The dress of the living Veddas and the legends concerning their dress remain the only vestiges of such evidence. Some of them wear or did wear cloth made of "riti" bark. In the popular usage a section of the Veddas is referred to as *kola veddo* (leaf wearing veddas) and the other section as *niri-veddo* (Veddas wearing nothing). Certain reeds have replaced the bark. Nudity has completely vanished today.

One can hope to recover very little information regarding the permanent body decorations and temporary ornamentation. For all one may try the subject may remain a mystery. Snail shells with the possibility of having once been hung together in a string have been found and that is all. Not one bead or cowrie shows any signs of being joined together. It is surprising if men and women of pre-historic Ceylon did not embellish their person with trifling ornamental decorations. Such was not the case. Ochre of different hues has been found. There can be no doubt that these pigments were used to paint the bodies as well as to draw on the cave walls. The manner in which the pieces of ochre have been worn out by rubbing shows a similarity to sandalwood rubbed for smearing the body.

Early Art[1]

In most cases of pre-historic civilization there have been preserved a few fragments of scanty evidence on which one could hazard at least a guess about the religion, beliefs and other practices of those peoples. There is nothing found so far to be of any use in this direction. The beliefs and practices of the past are lost to us save for the traits that may be preserved in the society of the Sinhalese and more likely the Veddas. How they disposed of the dead, how the gods were worshipped, their offerings and altars, temples and holy abodes remain veiled by the darkness of the forgotten past that can be lighted by the spade. We have before us a wide and virgin field. Our hope should be immense and energy unlimited. Mutual understanding, open-mindedness, a generous spirit, courage and outlook are as much required for success as a knowledge of the technique of research.

Pre-historic art can be divided into two groups. The cave art and the art of the home. One acts as a check on the other enabling us to arrive at a decision regarding dating by reference to style, phase and expression. In Ceylon no objects of art like engraved implements, painted animals, carved or modelled figurines have been found. A few caves do contain paintings and engravings but their artistic and ethnographic value as such seem to be very limited. These pictures and unintelligible signs help to show that the ancient men of Ceylon used art for expressing their impulses or beautifying their dwellings. There appears to be nothing sublime, religious or spiritual in this artistic manifestation. Various crude representations of animals and random signs are all that have been preserved. Even in their attempt at naturalistic expression the ancient artists have failed to capture the true details. The drawings resemble the puerile attempts at expression and are interesting in that they have preserved evidence of the interest the pre-historic men took in observing forms for translating into shapes through the medium of paint and brush, on the hard surface of cave walls.

That some at least of these caves have been inhabited by men as early as second century B.C. is proved by the presence of drip ledges and Brahmi inscriptions engraved on the outside. One may be permitted to argue that the religious followers only continued the practice of early times. Unless man occupied them prior to this period religious or other persons could not have attempted a new practice. The paintings may

1. Still, John—*J R A.S.*, Vol. XXII, 74. In the caves at Andiyagala are rock paintings which have no connecti n with Sinhalese Art. See also Seligmann, C. G.—*The Veddas*, 1911

have been earlier or later than this period. They are not modern. At least the Veddas who lived nearby assert that they do not remember to have seen them done or heard that they were done by their ancestors.

The distribution of cave art must necessarily be restricted to areas where suitable caves are found. Tantrimalai and the Bintenna area are known to have contained such drawings. Whether they were found in other caves which were later converted to painted cave temples of the Buddhists will be hard to state. Perhaps the caves of the Kegalle Ratnapura and Eastern region may one day reveal the hidden manifestations of primitive man's artistic expression.

That the paintings were not carried out with a brush is evident from the pictures themselves since no sign or trace of a brush line remains to be seen. Further no relics of vessels or brushes have been discovered. Probably the ochre was rubbed on a stone using the palm as a palette whilst the drawings were executed with the right forefinger.

There is evidence in the material finds to show the use of ochre. Whether this material was used to beautify the person or the cave dwelling is not easy to say. The colours used are red, yellow, black and ash grey. These colours could have been obtained by turmeric, ash and charcoal. No oils or gums were used. It, therefore, explains the paucity of the drawings, a large number of which may have been destroyed by the dampness and other atmospheric causes. Nevertheless the few temples that have escaped the ravages of time and other destructive agents furnish us with unmistakeable proof of the primitive type of artistic expression. If these are really pre-historic, then when the history of art comes to be written their position would be seen in true perspective. So poor are they in artistic merit and so lacking in aesthetic beauty as to hardly merit consideration as works other than those of children. They may be studied with advantage by the historian of art, the ethnographer and the student of primitive psychology. The outlook, visual development and expressive ability of the authors of these paintings are also indicated. One is also able to know something about their pre-occupations and powers of observation.

No religious or magical significance can in any way be attributed to the Ceylon paintings as yet. The drawings themselves preclude such a belief. Some at least convey a conventional or symbolic meaning for example the bow and arrow which are used even today as boundary marks by the Veddas. Both men and women may have been responsible for these paintings.

The art is simple and unsophisticated. They are puerile in execution

and profane in subject. The artists do not seem to have appreciated the third dimension. One and only one style runs throughout the whole series. No phases can be recognised. Their work can in no way be commended. The failure to depict the natural forms does not necessarily indicate an inability to express it. 'Symbols and conventional usage seem to be in great vogue. The majority of the drawings are examples of symbolism. Some of these have a meaning whilst the others remain unsolved. A survey of all such paintings so far available for study enables a grouping into four according to the suggested interpretation; namely, humans, animals, symbols and others.

Disposal of the Dead

There is no evidence from Ceylon as to the manner of disposal of the dead during the palaeolithic times. A comparative study of the other pre-historic races suggests the manner in which this was carried out. Burial and burning are the two chief methods. During the neolithic times or during the last phase of the stone age men developed an idea that the resting place of the body or ashes should be commemorated or protected from man or beast. This was done by the erection of a stone slab or the construction of the stone and earthen structure enclosing the remains. Such constructions are common throughout East and West. The diffusionist school of Anthropologists lead by Elliot Smith and Perry attempt to suggest Egypt as the original home of this practice. Egypt, Europe, America, the Pacific Isles and India contain a form of this idea developed or undeveloped. The material used in the erection of such edifices are large slabs of stone and hence this class of monument is called a megalith. The following classes of these monuments have been recognised namely, the menhir, dolmen, stone cist and passage grave. Of these Ceylon preserves to this day stone monuments that may be classed as dolmens. These could be seen at Rambukkana and Ratnapura.

Pot burials were also common in India from the time of Mohenjo-daro. Definite evidence as to the prevalence of this custom may be found along the strip of country between 25 miles north of Puttalam and Mannar. The writer has been able to examine such pottery and the wide rims of large urns revealed by the erosion of the sandy soil but was unfortunate in being unable to excavate any. The ashes and bones left over after cremation may have been deposited in the urn and buried here. This establishes the practice of cremation. It would be fully worth the trouble, expenses and labour if a small expedition could be sent out to

explore the area and excavate a few sites. Not only will this enable one to co-relate the chert implements with pottery but also it might establish a cultural connection between South India and North-West of Ceylon.

Pottery

The cave excavations undertaken by Sarasins and Seligmann yielded no pottery and axe heads in association with the chert and quartz implements thereby suggesting that the finds belonged to the Palaeolithic age despite the appearance of the industries to be Neolithic. The sites in question were near Kataragama and Bibile. Since that time a great deal of historic pottery has been passed off as pre-historic. However at many sites in the Pomparippu area stone tools of various descriptions have been picked up in the open in close association with pottery. These seem to belong to two series. A large urn series with thick body and massive rims, a smaller series with a thinner body and smaller rims. The thickness of the large series was about 20 mm. and that of the rim was 35 mm. whilst that of the smaller series was 6 mm. and that of the rim was 15 mm.

A fairly thick redslip was found in certain cases. On the whole the pottery was well-burnt though hand-made.

The composition of the clay seemed to contain a large quantity of sand. Thumb impressions and engraved lines arranged in herring bone shape on the outside were some of the decorations. The inside too seem to contain engraved lines. While dealing with the subject it might be interesting to record that some of the pottery discovered at Tirukketisvaran show unmistakeable signs of antiquity at least in shape and resemble the Neolithic material from South India. The cylindrical shapes are striking indeed as well as the forms of decoration. If it is so, we have another cultural link between the Neolithic South India and Ceylon. Neolithic pottery seems to be absent in caves. The writer himself has dug a few caves but the results were negative. There is no good reason to believe that pottery is absent from the open stations. Possibly it is in such sites that the best results could be obtained for establishing any sort of stratigraphical sequence. Sites like Mantai, Tirukketisvaram and many others ought to be rich sources of early pottery. Evidence has already come to light regarding the existence of Pre-Vijayan cultures in these areas and there is no reason why a cultural co-relation should not be established since it must be in the vicinity of this region that the early settlements arose, flourished and fell before the might of the invaders.

Sinhalese Art

It may be safe to assume that Sinhalese art commenced its career from the time of Devanampiya Tissa although the inheritance of earlier elements from the time of Pandukabhaya cannot be discounted. With the introduction of Buddhism there ensued a period of great artistic activity in which sculpture, architecture and painting played a worthy part, combining to facilitate the propagation of the new religion. Much of this art was Buddhist in spirit but Indian in appearance. It was also in part secular.

Though from time to time classes of artists and craftsmen arrived in the island from India the Sinhalese examples may be said to embody the genius of the Sinhalese even if the Indians helped in their production. What we have therefore are Sinhalese reactions to Indian cultural and religious impacts. The earliest source of this inspiration emanated from North India and the Kistna region with Amaravati as the focus.

During the sixth century Sinhalese art blossomed out in all its beauty. It was again the Indian Gupta tradition that inspired the Sinhalese as well. In technique and expression these examples show in a remarkable manner the close affinity—almost amounting to copying—to Indian models. A unique feature of the art of the period is the painting at Sigiriya which is a coeval phase of the maturity of the Gupta tradition that stands unrivalled at Ajanta and Bagh. Sigiriya is a court art and not religious in its aim. It had little appeal to the ordinary people. But on the other hand we have at Anuradhapura and Tissamaharama a religious art of sculpture and architecture well worthy of the national genius. Painting both for embellishment and religious persuasion existed. But unfortunately these have vanished due to various causes.

The Buddha figure of the sixth century Anuradhapura stands out as a masterpiece of technical perfection and religious expression. The stupendous edifices such as palaces and dagobas, monasteries and viharas and other secular buildings built of stone or brick still bear eloquent testimony to the ancient Sinhalese skill and constructive foresight both in art and architecture which at that time comprised one whole.

Then follows an obscure period of less activity from which very little is known and survives. There is as it were a break in the continuity of the national heritage. But we have the fine stone carvings at Isurumuniya in Pallava style. The paintings at Hindagala and Dimbulagala, few pieces of sculpture at Anuradhapura, and dagobas constitute the remains. Perhaps at this time a new spirit of Buddhism dominated.

This may have been the influence of Mahayana. It at least helped to popularise the worship of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Some art remains that may be called Mahayana have also been found.

In the XIIth century art was revived at Polonnaruva and Dimbulagala. It is at Polonnaruva that we have the best expression of the times. In sculpture and painting as well as in architecture the South Indian—Pallava and Chola—style influenced the Sinhalese considerably. But these are worthy examples that compel admiration from not only the Buddhists for whose cause they were produced but from all Ceylonese whose heritage it is today.

Great movements of art flourished and faded away. The people had a voice in shaping them but the patronage and the money came from the richer society and noble classes. But after XIIth century art passed into the hands of the popular classes. It got neither patronage nor due respect. It raised its head once more during the time of Kirti Sri but lapsed gradually into oblivion from which state it may be said to be struggling to find expression today.

III

THE RACIAL COMPOSITION

The total population of Ceylon as recorded at the 1946 Census on March 19th 1946 was 6,657,339. This number is made up of a group of races classified under ten main heads. The table shown below may be useful for comparative purposes. The last complete Census was taken in 1921 and 1931 figures are not available.

Race	Population 1921[1]	Population 1946	Increase or Decrease %
All Races ..	4,498,605	6,657,339	+·47.99
Low-country Sinhalese ..	1,927,057	2,902,501	+ 50.62
Kandyan Sinhalese ..	1,089,097	1,718,003	+ 57.75
Ceylon Tamils ..	517,324	729,611	+ 41.04
Indian Tamils ..	602,735	784,708	+ 30.19
Ceylon Moors ..	251,938	367,493	+ 49.87
Indian Moors ..	33,026	42,141	+ 27.60
Burghers & Eurasians ..	29,439	41,506	+ 40.99
Malays ..	13,402	22,481	+ 67.74
Veddas ..	4,510	2,361	— 47.65
Europeans ..	8,118	5,418	— 33.26
Others ..	21,959	41,116	+ 87.24

Ceylon Population by Race at 1921 and 1946 showing Increase or Decrease per cent

A race according to the scientific definition is a group of people showing similar tendencies, features, and mental make up whilst a fusion of such groups may be called a nation. The binding force of a nation may be a common language, blood, or land. Only the commonly recognised divisions may be considered thereby no attempt being made to characterise anyone as better than another.

1. *Census Publication, Ceylon*, 1911. Vol. I, Pt. I.

Anthropologically speaking Ceylon is one of the most interesting islands in the world. In this land we have not only a culture based on the Indian model but also many racial types. Further, the later European and Asiatic mixtures have given birth to a product whose biological study would be worth the best available talent. At the very outset, it must be understood, that a misconception seems to be gaining in strength that will for long be an obstacle in the clear path of racial fusion in the Island. The division of the Sinhalese into low and up-country seems to be without any reasonable basis. Geographically such a discrimination of the land may be permitted on physical features but racially one has very little justification to offer. Politically the consideration is modern serving the policy of divide and rule introduced by Europeans. Historically there is no truth in such a racial division.

Naturally, since the last Sinhalese capital was at Kandy anything worthy of the Sinhalese would be attributed to that region. With the passing away of the maritime provinces into European hands the remaining territory ruled by the Sinhalese was distinguished by the name of up-country. The rest was called low-country.[1] Such an innocent usage was then not suspected to be so pregnant with germs of disruptive dissension leading to disputes over cultural, social and racial problems. One may concede the practice of a different legal system, a difference in point of antiquity by material objects and artistic traditions, which is purely the result of insulation. It may even be permissible to state that, if racially there exists any notable difference between the upland and lowland folk it may be with regard to the higher percentage of Vedda and Dravidian blood in the upland element of the Sinhalese.

So far as recorded historical facts go the landing of Vijaya is a fact of great racial significance as it not only establishes the prior existence of racial elements but explains the round-headed racial element of the later periods. The story is as follows :

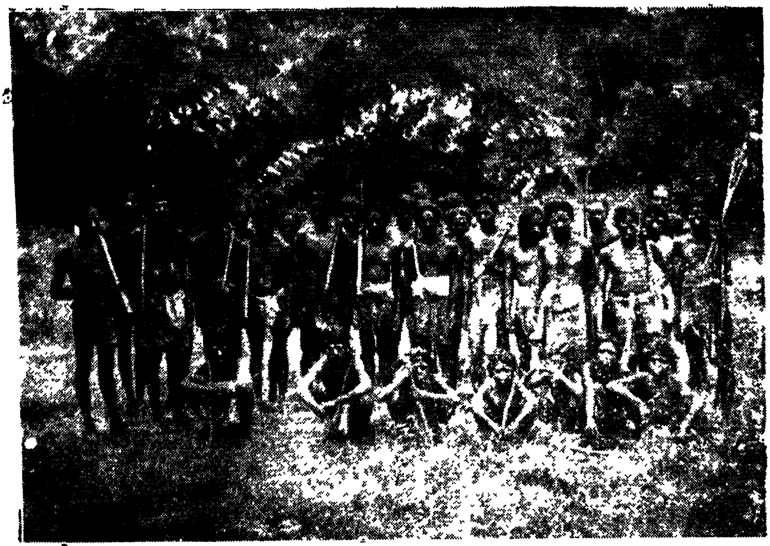
" In the 5th century B.C. two events that were later destined to influence the Island occurred. The passing away of Lord Buddha and the invasion of Vijaya.[2] A school of historians believe the invasion as typical of a series of such earlier happenings. However, Vijaya of the lion clan arrived in boats accompanied by his followers. With the loving assistance of a native princess Kuveni by name he conquered the

1. Hayley, F. A.—*Laws and Customs of the Sinhalese.*
2. Geiger, W.—*Mahawansa, Ceylon*, 1912

land and its people-the Yakkhas and Nagas. Racial discrimination against the indigenes was silently proclaimed by the rejection of Kuveni's claims to be his lawful queen. No amount of loving and tender persuasion and entreaties succeeded. Kuveni and her daughter Disala and son Jivahattha were banished into the Samanalagala region where the mother was killed by her people and the children grew up later to intermarry and found the Vedda race. Vijaya invited a princess from Madura, Central India, to be his queen. Not only a queen but other princesses and ladies for the companions landed in Ceylon. The marriages were solemnised and the occupation of Ceylon was commenced. In this connection it may be interesting to note the names of Yakkha chieftains who were duly honoured and settled during the reign of Pandukabhaya. Thus was introduced the brachycephalic element which could be explained as having its original home either in Bengal or Gujerat. It is immaterial where the early Sinhalese arrived from since both East and West harboured a brachycephalic stock using an Aryan tongue.

The hitherto existing races—Mediterranean, Australoid and Negrito—fused together into a homogeneous group called Veddas today. The new comers assumed a new name and continued to live as separate social units which from time to time mixed over and over again to compose the Ceylonese nation of today.

In this incoherent mixture of peoples the Veddas stand out as the earliest that entered the racial composition. Naturally very few of the present day Ceylonese would have been able to escape at least the indirect Vedda influence. We may boldly deny any affinity but our features and ethnic elements betray us. The Veddas themselves are a racial mixture and therefore a composite group. Today their number is about 2360 and these mostly inhabit the Uva and Eastern Provinces. The wonder of it is how this unfortunate humanity has managed to survive in the most inhospitable dry zone of the Island despite a thousand ills like malaria, parangi, syphillis etc. Their isolation may have helped their survival and preservation of certain elements of their individuality and culture. Had they died out or should they be allowed to die out by languishing in lonely despair the Ceylonese would be guilty of a distinct international disservice. The Veddas must be protected not as experimental material, not as living human curios but as decent citizens of a certain social group and cultural attainments. Their right to live in the land of their ancient adoption can never be denied them now.



A Group of Veddas



Vedda Women

In the environs of Uda-Dumbara and Kurunegala live scattered families of the people popularly known as Kinnaras, the weavers of Dumbara mats. Although resembling the Veddas on a superficial observation they are a different group. Short statured and coarse-featured with long hair the Kinnaras live a wretched life under trying conditions practically as out-castes. How this tribe came to be out-cast and yet preserve the fine art of weaving remains a mystery.

The so called Wanni folk[1] occupy a geographical area generally known as the Wanni Hatpattuwa which is the territory lying to the south of Anuradhapura as far as Kurunegala. They are a long headed, short-statured dark-skinned folk resembling the Veddas not only in their physical appearance but also in cultural make up. Some even bear family names reminiscent of Vedda ancestry. However, they assert their racial pride and caste superiority over all others like Bandaras and Goigamas.

Literature and legend have preserved to this day colourful stories about the Rodiyas.[2] Even royalty had to pay lavishly to redeem the amatory debts incurred with their sweet damsels. The story of Prince Sali is one such example. Tradition has associated, at sometime or other, the Rodiyas with princes and nobles and this fact is clearly borne out by the aristocratic looks of their maidens. How they received royal blood, whether as outcastes or otherwise, is a matter for further investigation. Observation confirms the fact.

The Rodiyas are an out-caste despised but feared. Begging is their traditional vocation and they live so today. No other profession is open to them although officially there is nothing against their employment. The writer knows of one who is a railway policeman. At least some of the Rodiyas desire employment. But custom and society stand strongly against. There is a popular fear about the curse of a Rodiya who is refused any charity. Hence begging seems to some a very profitable pastime. It is generally believed that the women resort to prostitution and are well off on that account.

The Rodiyas specially the women are tall, well built, fair and attractive. Despite their miserable lot they are on the whole healthy and strong. The women carry themselves charmingly well with their dignified bearing and noble gait. The men are however not so handsome. They are often very poor specimens. The Rodiyas owed certain obligations to society in cleansing of fields, making of leather

1. Nevill, H.—*Taprobanian*, Vol. III, p 13.
2. *Ibid*, Vol. III, pp 80, 82 & 83.

ropes and clearing carcases. These are things of the past. The women dance and walk the rope whilst the men beat the drum and sing. At the Kandy Perahera and the Anuradhapura festivals their arts may still be witnessed.

Human beings display a certain disposition towards those whom they despise, whom they out-cast and fear. Closer observation would show that a similar mentality prevails amongst the Sinhalese in respect of the aforementioned tribal groups. The Veddas, Kinnaras and Rodiyas are believed to possess an innate mysterious power which can be turned against others. It is doubtful whether this is magical as well or the power of jungle associations. One may observe how the village folk fearfully touch and feel the axes and other objects of the Veddas, fear the magic powers of the Kinnaras and dread the approach of a Rodiya as ominous. Touch physically or influence magically may bring much harm. The remedy lies in averting the touch or the presence. Therefore, avoidance has been traditionally observed in all such cases. Through psychological inertia, through despicable treatment and through injustice these groups of people linger on in ignorance. The missionary proselytises them, the globe-trotter is amused at them, the pedlar exploits them and their neighbours despise them. It is time even at this late hour to inaugurate a definite policy of tribal protection whereby the anthropological findings could be made the basis of organisation. It would be shameful if these people are suffered to perish through despondency and loss of nerve induced by inequality of treatment and disinterestedness of life.

The two major communities living in the Island are the Sinhalese speaking and the Tamil speaking peoples. They have a racial antiquity lost in the remote past. The Tamils occupy the Northern, North-Central and Eastern Provinces whilst the recent immigrants from South India constitute the labour population of the estates. These outnumber the Ceylon Tamils. The Ceylon Tamils[1] may be the descendants of early settlers who arrived in this Island from time to time from the shores of India. Some of these invasions took place in very ancient times. Some of these invasions at least contained people of Alpine and Armenoid stocks. The incursions of powerful bands of Tamils threatened the peace and security which was restored either by their conquest or abandonment of the northern territories. The political power waxed and waned. Nevertheless the Tamils continued to pour in either as

1. *Census of Ceylon*, 1911, p 71.

conquerors or settlers so much so that in about 2nd century B.C. Elara's kingdom threatened the Sinhalese.

During the Christian era the Malabars, Cholas, Cheras, and Pandyas attempted to over-run the Island in waves but failed. During a continuous period of centuries the Tamil influence was seriously felt not only in social and cultural spheres but in the racial mixture as well. During periods of peaceful settlement when the two races lived in amity as neighbours inter-marriages took place. This practice became very common during the later Kandyan Kingdom.

Although the Tamils unlike South Indians do not possess such minute shades of difference in the division of castes they can count a fair number of caste divisions in their social organisation. Most of the caste divisions are based on a functional basis and are observed in orthodox fashion. To a superficial observer the striking distinctive difference of colour among the Jaffna Tamils leads to a division into a fair and dark grouping. Of the darker more numerous lot the Vellalas are mostly round headed alpines or armenoids. The lighter in colour may generally belong to the high castes. The prevalence of Sinhalese among the Jaffna Tamil population is further attested by the presence of Koviars who, though Tamil in name, may certainly be certain Goigama captives of Sinhalese.

The Arabs[1] who wrested the maritime trade from the Phoenecians were acquainted with Ceylon from the early Christian period. The presence of Roman and Greek coins may be a clue to an ancient trade with the Mediterranean lands. It is unlikely that the Arabs went beyond Ceylon. The Chinese handled the trade with the farther East. This very fact encouraged local settlements of Arab traders. Such settlements increased from the 8th century onwards.

In the 9th century Ceylon bays like Beruwala, Galle and Puttalam attracted Moor traders[2] to establish depots. Those groups who acted as travelling agents and collectors at times married Sinhalese or Tamil women and settled down permanently and even today their names, mode of life and dress betray such an admixture. That even the Sinhalese kings recognised them is shown by the bestowal on them of titular ranks and honorific names[3] which are even to this day used by them. These men are cultivators and tie their hair in a knot. These were fair in colour and Mediterranean in race but they talked Tamil as

1. *Census of Ceylon*, 1921, Vol. I, Pt. 1, p 208.
2. Ramanathan, P.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. X—1888.
3. *Raja Vaidya Muhandiram Palkumbure Vaidyatilaka Rajakaruna Gopal Mudiyanselage Segu Muhamadu Udayar.*

that was the language used by the South-East coastal traders at that time. This group is called the Sonahar.

There is another group of Moors popularly called coast Moors whose ancestry appears to be different from the previous class. It is true, they were traders and spoke Tamil but these stocks were descended from the original Arabs who had settled down along the coastal districts of South-West India. The Indians of these areas were the dark hued population belonging to Dravidian stocks speaking a Dravidian tongue. Naturally the Indian women who married the Arabs belonged to an inferior racial stock. These admixtures embraced Islam and followed the culture of the Mohammedan population. It is the folk of these stocks that, during later periods, arrived from time to time. These are called Sammanhas. Strangely enough the light-eyed, fair skinned, tall and handsome Indian Moors who are really of Turkish extraction did not come to Ceylon until very recent times. Today they are found as Indian Moors.

The Tamil population[1] of the present day is spread over the whole Island with concentrations in the North, Eastern and North-Central Provinces. The members of this community speak Tamil, a branch of the Dravidian main group of languages.

The Chetties[2] must also receive mention in a racial description of the Tamils. This need not deal with the Nattukottai Chetties who form into a guild for the purpose of business exploitation in Ceylon. They are Indians of temporary residence. The Colombo Chetties are known to be the survivors of early Chetty traders, money-lenders and merchants who inter-married with the Sinhalese and Tamils. They are mostly Catholic converts and have been in Ceylon for very long. They speak Sinhalese and are considered in Colombo to be quite, respectable enough to practise connubium with the high caste Goigama Sinhalese. Colombo Chetties are Ceylonese.[3]

There are a good number of Afghans who have been attracted by the prospect of money-lending. As userers they are notorious for the high rate of interest and the method of charging it. An easy man to know he becomes the most difficult one to forget. Vaggei[4] are another group of the Ceylonese population, that has been absorbed. They were a small community and lived in the Anuradhapura, Kurunegala and Mullaitivu areas.

1. Tambipillai, V. J.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXI, 1908.
2. *Census of Ceylon*, 1921, Vol. I, Pt. 1, p 208.
3. Today they have such names as *Alles*, *Costa*, *Babapulli*
4. *Census of Ceylon*, 1921—Vol. I, Pt. 1, p. 208.

The historical foundation of the Sinhalese nation was laid on the day Vijaya and his followers landed in Ceylon. From thence onward the march of racial progress has been through an inter-mixture of pre-existing racial types as well as an admixture of later arrivals. Easy fusion was possible owing to the cultural and colour affinities. Very seldom is it possible to detect the survivals or persistence of earlier racial elements as have not yet had sufficient time to fuse properly. Of these the Tamil and the European types could be detected in the Sinhalese population of today. That the Veddas have contributed to the making of the Sinhalese population is a fact that may be appreciated even today. Strangely enough the up-country Sinhalese preserve these traits in a marked degree. There are not many Sinhalese who show the true nordic characters according to the European standards of judgment. But a large proportion of the population consists of a round headed element which may be the survival of the Aryan race. These also resemble the Alpine type. To the long-headed Mediterranean type belong the Wanni folk. The intermediate mesocephalic type predominates in the Island. This may be the result of the two earlier types. The substratum of the Sinhalese population may be a Negrito type on which were superimposed an Australoid and later Mediterranean types. Then came the brachycephalic alpine or the so called Aryan type. Such are the racial components so far suspected in the Sinhalese composition. There is a strong probability and a likely possibility of a further component from the little suspected area of the Indonesian islands. How far this element contributed to the improvement or degeneration of the race it is not easy to say. They were precursors of Vijaya.

The presence of Greek and Roman coins[1] is no index of European racial infiltration from these quarters. The possibility of even a minute degree of these elements affecting the population should not be ruled out.

The nature of the earlier European invasions is not fully known nor do we know anything of the native reaction to the intrusions of the foreigner. Of the later European invasions and the Sinhalese reactions we know from the experiences of today and the records[2] of the past. From about the 14th century onwards the European element began to infilter into the Island. It influenced the racial composition at least in a small measure. The Portuguese landed here by mere chance. They continued to remain as traders and finally began to exert their

1. Still, John—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XIX, 1907.
2. *Rajavaliya.*

authority as a military power. Certain classes were permitted to intermarry with the local population as a means of ensuring security and defence. So long as the Portuguese power continued as a result of their national government the Portuguese citizens were respected and recognised. But with the fall of the Government by Dutch conquest the Island fell into Dutch hands. The maritime provinces which up to now had been under Portuguese occupation were transferred to the Dutch Government. Meanwhile the Sinhalese had their own system of Government in the central inland provinces. The Portuguese, their descendants and admixtures degenerated, despised by the Dutch and cursed by the Sinhalese. Their survivors today are the mechanics and shoe-makers and artisans who known as Portuguese Burghers bear living testimony to the unhappy results of ancient and modern colonial domination.

The same pitiful fate overcame the Dutch colonists and half-breeds when their Government surrendered to the British. One thing alone helped to delay the process of degeneration and contempt and that was the patronage extended by the British. It may be remarked that so far the Dutch hybrids are the only group of mixed humanity who have suffered least social depreciation on account of hybridization. But the initial preferential treatment could not be maintained in the face of democratic treatment and open competition. They held on due to the initial advantage but soon after its loss began to fall. The psychological attitude was not destined to help their survival since they fell between the nationals whom they despised and the British who despised them. The survivors are the Dutch Burghers the majority of whom are clerks at the commercial and government offices. The British settlers discouraged racial mixture for a variety of reasons of which the colour discrimination and imperial prestige were the paramount. Despite all such ideas the young and even the old civilian in colonial exile solaced himself in the company of the daughters of the land. The unavoidable issues of such unions introduced additional European blood into the national stem. The offspring of these mixed marriages came to be known as Eurasians.

The other source of mixture originated in the British Isles or the European Continent where the Sinhalese and Tamil students contracted marriages with European girls. Very few of this class of marriage have proved to be successful. Many factors contribute to their failure. The stable society did not favour such unions. Besides these insurmountable difficulties there was the fact that the European girls belonged in

most cases to a comparatively lower social status. To add to this there were the incompatibility of new social relationships, ignorance, climatic change, superiority complex, ostracism from European society and despondency. Those few who overcame such prejudices have been the educated and these marriages may be considered successful.

There are a few groups of people who may be considered as subsidiary introductions into the Island. The Sinhalese have had free association resulting even in racial mixture. Nevertheless, the Kaffirs, Malays, and South Indian labourers have managed to survive preserving their identity. The Kaffirs[1] have been imported to Ceylon either as slaves or as militia from the time of the Sinhalese kings. The Portuguese, Dutch and English employed them as musicians in the Regimental bands. Consequently the Kaffirs were stationed near their strongholds. We find them today in Colombo, and at Puttalam in a small village called Sellankandal. Their dances, songs, and melodies namely, Kaffirinna, Chikoti and Baila are still popular among the mechanic class. Strangely enough these terms have assumed a national character.

The Malays[2] in Ceylon are supposed to have been brought by the Dutch who employed them as their military. But there are stories to the effect that they have been in Ceylon at an earlier date. The Dutch and English generals brought them for defending the Island. That these troops have served their cause faithfully remains true but they have earned in their service considerable hatred of the Sinhalese. These Malays have married Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim women with the result that their Mongoloid features are fast disappearing. The Malays embrace Islam and live practically in every part of the Island but they are concentrated at Colombo, Hambantota, Badulla, and Nuwara Eliya.

Just as today conservancy and estate labour is imported from India even so in the past the Sinhalese got down artisans and craftsmen. A list of such names is preserved in a popular Sinhalese verse.[3] Of these the Mukkuvar[4] live near Puttalam and Batticaloa. Fishing is their vocation. Their religion is Christianity and Islam. That they belonged to a matrilineal society may be observed by a study of the laws of inheritance. Paravars prefer to be called Bharathas for what reason one cannot be certain. They are traders who spend a short time in Ceylon and then return to India. They leave their families in India.

1. *Ceylon at the Census*, 1911, p 244.
2 *Ceylon Census*, Vol. I, Pt. 1 p 244
3. Rajasinha's reply to Knox.
4. Brodie, A. O.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. II, Pt. 2

Both groups are dark and long headed. The only nomadic group of people living in Ceylon are the Ahikuntakas otherwise called Kuravans.[1] They are a South Indian Telugu-speaking people who live in small palmyra huts for two or three days in one place. They come under the class Gypsies. They resemble the Indian labourers. Snake charming, astrology and stealing are their trades.

The foregoing short survey would enable the reader to visualise the racial problem in proper perspective in a way not to worry too much about the Aryan or Dravidian complexes. The Ceylonese are mixed not once but a hundred times. When one realises the diversity of racial elements and variety of culture complexes that have contributed to the growth of the Ceylonese national pattern it would be meaningless to take pride in caste superiority. The wider concept of a Ceylonese nationhood must be visualised by a fusion of narrow nationalisms.

1. *Ceylon Census*, Vol. I, Pt. 1, p 229



Group of Ahikuntakayas

IV

RACIAL HISTORY AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION

LANKADVIPA OR the island of Lanka is unique in so far as it is the only territory in the whole world about which there exists a continuous historical record, unbroken for a period of nearly 2,500 years. Much, at least comparatively much, is known about this period commencing with the passing away of the Buddha.[1] Legendary traditions, historical records, archaeological data and even lithic inscriptions provide a wealth of material for further investigations into the problems of this period. Very little scientifically collected material is available for a true insight into the pre-historic past of the Island. Much material is said to exist but the writer relies very little on its genuineness since most of it has been collected by amateurs untrained in the technique of scientific excavation. It is also a remarkable fact that none of this much boasted material has ever been photographed *in situ* in their true originally deposited level at the time of observation and discovery. The scientist must look to other sources and await further discoveries.

The material for the survey of the pre-history of the Island is, therefore necessarily, limited but not completely lacking. This is not due to any absence of relics of pre-historic times but chiefly due to the want of scholars, research facilities and institutions. It is hoped that a re-orientation will inspire the responsible authorities to provide facilities in furthering progress of humanistic studies in Ceylon.

For the present, therefore, certain facts must remain indefinite and undefined. Two periods called ancient and early may be assumed. The ancient settlers of Ceylon are known by their material remains to have occupied the north-western, south and south-eastern parts of the Island. A few caves in the Sabaragamuwa Province are also said to have harboured these ancient people of the island. But scientific data are lacking. The only cave that had been scientifically excavated is at Nilgala[2] in the Badulla District. This cave contained no occupational

1. Geiger, W.— English Translation of *Mahavamsa*, Introduction.
2. Seligmann, G.—*Man*, 1908. Article 63 gives sufficient details to enable a reconstruction of the excavation.

level below two and a half feet and rendered no artifacts other than quartz.[1] The results of cave excavations undertaken by the writer confirm the truth of this observation. A careful analysis of the material remains so far collected leads one to the certain conviction that at least four types of industries found favour with the population, namely, a core industry; a flake industry; a pebble industry; and a blade industry. But as to their natural succession of development one cannot yet say very much beyond the fact that within each type itself there can be observed a good deal of development until the highly specialised microlithic blades terminate the series. The list below shows the present distribution of the stations at which these implements have been discovered. Two series, one that of the hills and the other that of the plains may be observed. References to the megalithic stations, containing a dolmen,[2] and stone cists,[3] pot burials[4] and crude artistic manifestations have also to be mentioned in this connection.

Sites where both series of implements have been found

Bandarawela
Bogawantalawa
Balangoda
Chilaw
Diyatalawa
Dimbulla
Dikoya
Dolosbage
Galle
Gampola
Henabedde cave
Hambantota
Horton Plains
Haputale
Hatton
Kataragama
Kallodi (E.P.)
Kongala*
Kamburupitiya
Kobbarevillu*
Kumpudumalai* (N.C.P.)
Kunji-Aru* (N.C.P.)
Kurundu Oya (Maturata)
Katugastota
Maskeliya
Matale
Mankulam
Madulsima
Maskeliya cave
Minihagalkanda
Marichikadai*
Matara
Moderagam river (12 mls. from mouth)
Nilgala caves
Nawalapitiya
Nuwara-Eliya
Peradeniya
Pundaluoya
Puttalam
Pomparippu
Pattipola
Ranchigoda (Matara Dictrict)
Rillamulla (Maturata)
Tangalla
Uda Pussellawa (Uva)
Uda Patana
Vanathavillu(4milesbeyondPuttalam)
Ulapane
Wellipatanwila (Ambalantota)
Yala

* Places not yet identified.

1. The majority were made of quartz although microliths made of chert have been found. a few bones were also discovered.
2. *Journal of Science, Ceylon*, Vol. II, Pt. 2, p 96, pl. 76, 77.
3. *Ibid*, p 94, Pl. 74.
4. Dr. A. Guebhard, Member of the Society Prehistorique in France. J. F. Andrews—*Man*, Vol. IX, 1909, Art. 104, p 181.



MAP SHOWING ANCIENT SITES

The distribution of the industrial and constructional relics suggests two types of settlement, one on the uplands in the central part of the island and the other on the plains. How much these types differed in culture and mode of life it is not easy to state with the present available evidence. Much wild conjecture has been attempted. However, one can notice a distinct difference between them in so far as the actual implements are concerned. The plains settlements gave rise to a flake industry fashioned out of chert whilst the material used in the uplands was mainly quartz. The racial differences of the physical types, their thoughts and beliefs, customs and manners, magical observances and religious worship and psychological make up and mental outlook of these people remain to be established. So far no human skeleton, skull, burial or grave has been discovered to enable anyone to paint a true picture of the ancient settlers of the Island. The veil of obscurity still shrouds the facts whose discovery alone will reveal the truth of the Island's ancient history.

The early Sinhalese of a later period, whether they were immigrants or aboriginals, may have intermingled with each other to produce a composite group of people. Periodic infiltrations of South Indian and even North Indian racial elements cannot be altogether eliminated from such a composition. Nevertheless, conservative elements may have resisted admixture as a natural and inevitable reaction. But with the newcomers from across the continent the local population would have had very little chance of competition and survival. Such local groups may have been forced to evacuate the fertile habitations in the face of advancing bands of newcomers. The thick jungles and the inhospitable areas became their final resting place. Further internal migrations resulted from climatic fluctuations and desiccation of the land. Out of many such bands there still survive one tribe, namely, the modern Veddas, who occupy the eastern lowlands, having reached the furthes outpost of their migratory expedition.

The Veddas can still provide evidence of the highest value in the anthropological investigations of the Island. A close physical observation, when considered in conjunction with the bodily measurements of the present day Veddas supports the theory of their composite character. The racial constituents of the admixture are seen even now. These are Negrito, Australoid and Mediterranean elements. The Veddas can therefore, have no claim to be aboriginal nor are they the original inhabitants of their present habitat. It is possible that they

came from the west—the Sinharaja[1] Forest in the Sabaragamuwa Province—along the base of the central hills in an anti-clockwise direction. Compare the modern Veddas with the jungle tribes of the southern part of India, viz., Malavedans, Irulas and Sholagas.[2] A remarkable similarity still prevails. What can be the answer? Migrations of such tribes from India must be the most likely answer. They may have come here in waves, each succeeding band driving the preceding ones into the inhospitable interior until later the early ancestors of the Modern Veddas met in the Sinharaja Forest. Prepare a map of place names, expressing a Yakkha, Naga or Vedda connotation. Note the concentration of the sites in the West and their absence in North-West and South-East.

The following facts further support this view. Sabaragamuwa[3] means literally the village of the hunters or Veddas. It is the only district by this name. Geographically, this area is the most likely home of primitive jungle folk as the natural vegetation could have easily supported a hunter population.[4] Legend mentions the fact that the two children of Kuveni[5] departed in the direction of Adam's Peak[6] which is also in the same area. The legend[7] about Veddagala which is a village here points to the belief that this was the home of the Veddas at one time. In the present population in and around the environs of Veddagala a Vedda element may be observed. Also a site named Potupitiya which is not far from here is mentioned in a Sinhalese verse[8] of the 14th century as being peopled with jungle folk. In this same district is situated the hill top called Adam's Peak on which The Buddha[9] is believed to have set foot. Traces of a Vedda element in the population all along the base of the hills become manifest until the actual Veddas are seen in their stronghold in the Province of Uva.

1. *Geographical Magazine*, 1935—Baker.
2. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. 1, p 444.
3. Another far fetched etymology is 'sabara' taken to mean gems.
4. Compare Ituri and Congo of Africa and Amazon of America which are thick tropical rain forests that breed pygmy races that live by hunting and collecting.
5. When Vijaya sent away his consort Kuveni and her children they left in the direction of Sabaragamuwa where her uncle and people lived.
6. The name given to the highest point of the mountain called Samanala. This whole area is considered to be protected by God Saman whom some identify as the brother of Rama known as Lakshmana.
7. The people in the neighbourhood of Veddagala point out to a natural crevice in a rock and say that the last of the Veddas was tied to this and beaten to death.
8. *Paravi Sandesaya*—v. 53 mentions a village Potupitiya by name, The jungle folk are described as wearing riti bark.
9. *Mahavamsa* gives the reason for Buddha's visits to Ceylon on three occasions. These are to Mahiyangana, Kelaniya and Samanala Mountain.

The suspected Negrito traits are wavy hair that hang down in ringlets, slightly everted thick lips, wide nose and broad nostrils, slight prognathism and the limb proportions. Among the Australoid characteristics are a profusion of body hair, full beard, thick lips, broad nose, rugged features and stocky build. The Mediterranean element shows a fair complexion, lack of body hair, absence of beard, thin lips, fine nose, fine features and medium stature. A social, religious or vocational difference cannot be attributed to each of these types although it may be suspected that the Negrito element contributed the art of hunting, the Australoids the devastating type of jungle cultivation and the Mediterraneans agriculture and arts. The people referred to as the Yakkhas and Nagas in the Sinhalese tradition and who are supposed to have been the inhabitants of the Island at the time of Vijaya's arrival can be tentatively equated with the Australoids and Mediterraneans respectively. But who could have been the Negritos ? The lost tribe of legendary people called the Nittevo[1] may be the Negritos. These elements may have been mixed even at the time of Vijaya's arrival and the components of the admixture even at this time may have become legendary owing to antiquity. Nevertheless, definite mention has been made in the fourth century traditional records [2] of the Yakkha chiefs, their cults and other primitive forms of worship such as emblems and trees.

A glance at the map of place names shows the south-east sector to be free of sites. Another least suspected source of racial infiltration into the Island may be suspected here. The most likely origin of this element may be the group of Indonesian Islands. Little racial and more cultural evidence is available although both may be considered by some to be negligible.

The racial elements are :

(*a*) A faint trace of Mongoloid features in the modern Sinhalese population, and

(*b*) An alveolar prognathism.[3]

The cultural elements are :

(*a*) The presence of the outrigger and coconut.[4]

1 *Taprobanian* by Hugh Neville, Vol. I, page 67, mentions such a tribe. The description is that of an ape like, coarse featured, short statured tribe of pygmy men. A similar legend is current in the Panama Pattuwa of the Batticaloa district in Eastern Province.

2. *J.R.A S.* (C.B.), Vol. XXXI, 1909, by S. Paranavitana *Pre-Buddhist Religious Beliefs in Ceylon*

3. An alveolar prognathism marked by a dental protuberance characterise the Sinhalese.

4. These are believed to have been introduced from Melanesian area. Compare the Polynesian word 'oru-u' with the Sinhalese word 'oruwa' meaning a boat or outrigger.

Neville, Hugh, *Taprobanian*, Vol. I, p 69:
Fergusson—*J R.A.S.* Vol. XIX, 1906.
Perera, A. A.—*Sinhalese Folk Lore*, p 18 mentions the Soul Boat, which idea may have differed from Indonesia.

(*b*) Masks.
(*c*) Mode of wearing the lower garment in the south.
(*d*) Crocodile cult.

The *Mahavamsa* and other ancient records mention certain kingdoms and townships as being the abodes of Yakkhas and Nagas. Quite likely these may have been prosperous settlements in the past. That these persisted in being occupied throughout the ages in spite of changing religious associations and beliefs may be accepted as is usually the case with such sites. Some of the sites are Mahiyangana, Kelaniya, Samantakuta, Loggala and Laggala.[1] There is reason to believe that considerable areas of land once occupied along the western and north-western coast of the Island may have been overrun by the sea from time to time. Legendary references to such incidents of a periodic nature may find support in geological facts. A great many villages in the environs of Kelaniya[2] are said to have been submerged by tidal waves even during historical times. How much more prevalent may have been the feature, it is not possible to say. But, undoubtedly much evidence of pre-historic times may have been lost in this manner.

Ceylon provides some interesting and useful material for the study of man not only of Ceylon but of the world. The study of peoples' history, culture and civilization can never be fully appreciated without an understanding of the peoples themselves and their problems. We have here the material for a study of culture contact and racial mixture between quite distinct and different cultural and racial elements going back to historical times. We have here the modern problems of missionary activity, colonial subjection and culture conflict. We have here the delicate problem of caste, its superiority and inferiority. We have here even in a small degree the problem of colour discrimination.

That population of the near and distant past has yet to be re-constructed out of the archaeological material yet undiscovered since, unfortunately for the anthropologist no skeletal remains of pre-historic or historic man have been unearthed. It may be possible to infer with some degree of certainty that the early population consisted of the legendary Nittewas, Yakkhas, and Rakshasas and Nagas who may be equated with the Negritoes, Australoids and Mediterraneans. Out of an admixture of such elements arose the modern Veddas.

1. *Samantakutavannana*, a Pali work of 14th century mentions a long list of Yakkha settlements Verses 516-518—Govt. Ed. Ceylon 1910.

2. *Mahavamsa* and *Rajavaliya* refer to periodic submergence of the land by uprising of the sea.

There may be other racial infiltrations of unsuspected elements. These must engage the attention of the specialist. Other racial problems are also there and will always stir up popular sentiment. But to any popular feeling the scientist must pay little heed and he must always attempt to clear the issues without prejudice. The writer has outlined the social types. The attempt to group them into certain well-known physical types is seen below :—

1. Vedda
2. Pre-Dravidian
3. Sinhalese dolico
4. Sinhalese brachy
5. Armenoid
6. Melanid
7. Mediterranean
8. Negroid
9. Mongoloid
10. European

In an analysis of a population into racial units a note of warning must be added, as otherwise, some at least of the readers may be misled into believing that every individual component member must invariably possess the characteristics of the type. This, however, need not be the case. The science of Anthropometry is not so accurately exact. Neither does the science of Anthropology profess such exactness. Nevertheless it is commonly agreed amongst scientists that a race type does exist in one's mind with regard to groups of humanity. The classification of such groups of peoples remains still one of the most delicate and difficult problems.

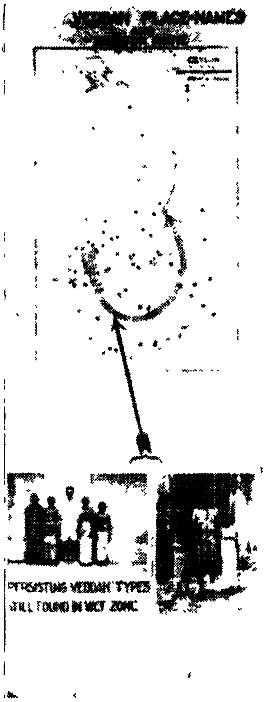
In any such classification it is essential to keep apart physical characters, culture elements and language as it is now a clearly established fact that no co-relation of a zoological nature exists between race, culture and language. Racial affinity, for purposes of a scientific classification must be zoological dependent on and detected by physical characters both internal and external. The particular environmental effects on race must be eliminated as a pre-requisite of racial diagnosis. Judgments must be formed not on the basis of a single character but on that of a combination of dominant characters which are naturally transmitted through reproduction. From ancient times observations of external physical characters have been made use of in human classification. But since of recent years an effort is being made to establish racial affinities on the basis of mathematical calculation of the bodily

measurements of certain prominent landmarks of the individual. A population may be so classified into groups whose likeness or difference to each other may be calculated as an index known as a co-efficient of racial likeness or difference. This is a specialised branch of statistical analysis of biological data.

The average layman pays little attention to such complicated and intricate methods of racial differentiation. What he needs are a few broad criteria of recognising at sight and on superficial observation the different types of a population. He is also interested to find out in what features he differs from or resembles his neighbour. The following points should prove useful to form the basis of classification of a population. These are—

Head breadth—cephalic index
Head length
Prognathism—facial and alveolar
Lips
Hair form and colour
Eye
Nose
Skin colour
Stature.

The human constituents of the Ceylonese population arranged under social types have been enumerated in a previous chapter. Irrespective of any social discrimination of caste, class and race with traditional social values attached to each the population may be classified into physical types. The present Vedda population cannot be left out as undoubtedly it forms the basic structure of the later Ceylonese composition. This itself is an admixture of three human types, viz., Negrito, Australoid and Mediterranean. It is an observable fact that the lower stratum of the population shows definite signs of a Vedda element which must not be confused with that prevalent in the Wanni folk. The present population is apparently a very mixed one. It has been the result of various admixtures repeatedly mixed amongst themselves as well as with foreign elements that came to be introduced from time to time. These have not failed to leave their impress. There may, therefore, be present the so called Aryan element side by side with the Negro and remarkable results may be expected if one were to group the Ceylonese according to these types and then sub-divide each type into the different castes as the writer suspects that some of the despised castes may still preserve the majority of the aristocratic types. With





SINHALESE & VEDDA PHYSICAL TYPES

A VEḌḌÁ



the data so far available on the general populations combined with the results of observation and measurement of individuals from the different parts of the Island it may be possible to classify the present population under the following types :—

1. Vedda —(a) open eyed
   —(b) Gond
2. Pre-Dravidian
3. Sinhala dolico (Wanni)
4. Sinhala brachy
5. Armenoid
6. Melanid
7. Mediterranean
8. Negroid
9. Mongoloid
10. European

The Vedda as a type can be quite easily recognised although the Vedda himself is a mixture of more than one racial element. It is a regularly persitsting type prevailing chiefly in the Badulla District. One is often impressed by the reticent shy manner of a Vedda. He is a thin small made man of a dark complexion with wide open eyes. He has a small head narrow and long, thin lips, dark wavy hair, scanty body hair except in the Australoid type that has profuse body hair and beard. The eyes are small, open, dark brown and dark in colour. Nose is broad with wide alae except the Mediterranean element that has a fine straight nose. The skin colour is dark and tends to be oily.

Stature	1,578 mm
Cephalic Index	72.6
Cranial Capacity	1,227 cc
Nasal Index	73.1

The Pre-Dravidian type though not so common does actually crop up generally in the Tamil-speaking areas of the Island. It may be the continuation of a very early element in the population. The type itself is vigorous and is bound to persist. It is a thick-set, rugged type with apparent virility. This type of man has a long and narrow head with defined features. There is no prognathism. He has thick lips and a wide mouth. The hair is very dark and wavy, body hair being scanty. The eye colour is dark brown or dark. He has a large wide nose. The skin colour is invariably dark or black. The stature varies from medium to tall showing a big-boned bodily structure.

The Sinhala dolico type may be graphically described as the Wanni type. It is the common type of the so called Wanni and upcountry districts. This forms the backbone of the Sinhalese peasantry in the dry zone. This type is weak and emaciated. It is the result of

malnutrition and environment. The amateur may confuse this with the Vedda type although these are distinctly different. This type of man has a long narrow head with a slight alveolar prognathism. He has thin lips with fine teeth, slightly wavy dark hair, moderate body hair, small eyes dark or dark brown in colour, small narrow nose, skin colour dark brown or black with short or medium stature.

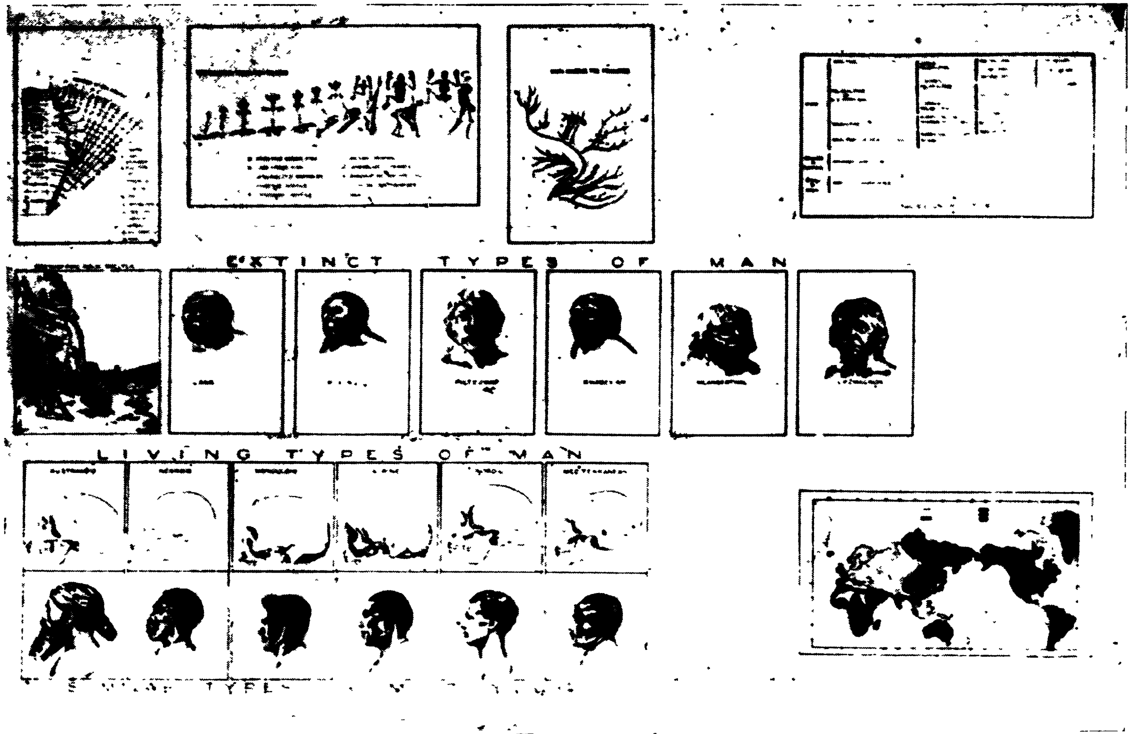
Stature	..	..	.. 1,592 mm
Cephalic Index ..		..	.. 75.3
Cranial Capacity		..	.. 1,268 cc
Nasal Index	..	..	.. 74.9

Sinhala brachys probably the Vijayan type comprise the bulk of the Sinhalese population and together with the Wanni type constitute the Sinhalese of the present day. In general appearance a man of this type looks an aristocratic noble with a provocative affinity to the Bengalis of today. He has a long and broad head. At times certain individuals show marked alveolar prognathism and with a general tendency to alveolar prognathism and dental protrusion. The lips are somewhat thick, hair is dark and slightly wavy, with profuse body hair. Eyes are not too small and dark in colour. The nose is narrow and straight. Skin colour varies from brown to fair.

Stature	..	..	.. 1,609 mm
Cephalic Index ..		..	.. 80.8
Cranial Capacity		..	.. 1,298 cc
Nasal Index	..	..	.. 69.9

The Armenoid type is not uncommon in the Island. It is found mostly among the Tamils. This type of man has a heavily built body with a tendency to corpulency. He has a short broad head that is brachycephalic. Prognathism is absent, thick lips with the lower lip tending to be pendant. He has dark light wavy hair with profusion of body hair. The eyes are somewhat long. The nose is prominent with a hooked tip. Skin colour varies from fair to dark. He is medium to tall in stature. The Melanid type is not uncommon amongst the Sinhalese. It is an ancient type and may be easily distinguished from the Pre-Dravidian and Wanni as it lacks both the rugged coarseness of the former and weak appearance of the latter. His head length is medium so is the breadth. He is brachycephalic, with no prognathism. His lips are thin has very dark hair, moderate body hair, dark eyes, with fine straight nose. He has a very dark almost black skin colour. The stature varies from short to very tall.

The Mediterranean is a fine-featured handsome type, quite common



RACIAL TYPES COMPARED

Chart Showing Comparative Racial Types

in the Island. He is of delicate build and average proportions. His head is long and narrow. He has no prognathism, his lips are thin, hair is dark and wavy. He has sparse body hair. His eye colour is brown, nose is straight, skin colour is brown or fair. He is average in stature.

The Negroid type is sometimes met with amongst the Sinhalese and Tamil population. It is very difficult to miss this as the colour, lips, hair and facial prognathism betray the ethnic elements. The general appearance is unpleasant at first. The individual shows great energy which has accounted for his success. His head is long and narrow, face is prognathous, lips are thick. His hair is dark wavy or curly. The body has very little hair. Eyes are brown and small. Nose is broad and short with wide alae. Skin colour is dark brown or quite black. He is medium to tall in stature and dolicocephalic. He has generally a thick set body.

The Mongoloid element is of very recent introduction and preserves the ethnic traits fairly markedly. This type is seldom observed among the Sinhalese and Tamils. It may develop as a pathological condition. The head is short and wide. There is no prognathism. The lips are thin. Hair is straight and dark in colour. Body hair is almost absent. The eye is almond shaped with an epicanthic fold. The nose is not prominent but broad and flat. Skin colour is light brown or pale yellow. Medium to short in stature and effeminate in general appearance.

The European type is also of recent development and can be fairly easily detected on observation. But in certain cases the European admixture can scarcely be noticed. His general appearance and build are European. The head form varies from round to narrow with no prognathism. Lips are thin. Hair is straight but of a light colour. Eye colour varies from brown to grey or even blue. Nose is straight and fine. Skin colour is fair. He is medium to tall in stature.

The following observations may be made regarding the Sinhalese round headed type. Such a type although found scattered amongst the Sinhalese speaking parts of the Island seems restricted in the Indian Continent to the West littoral East Bengal and Mysore. Could this in any way explain the origin of the Sinhalese to any of those areas. The present evidence is insufficient to assert such an origin purely on physical measurements. But the social kinship when studied with physical attributes seem to favour such a view.

V

SINHALESE VILLAGE

THE SINHALESE village is a very unpretentious institution having a few mud-built huts, an assorted growth of trees, chiefly coconut and jak, and a common well. The number of individual houses varies from ten upwards. The population is never very great. The villages in the jungle are never permanent settlements but passing phases of the rural topography fluctuating with the growth and development of adjacent suburban cities. Near paddy fields and waterways one generally finds a village, its lands with their assorted plantations being inhabited by groups of related folk. Thus a village is a social unit interlinked by economic and kindred ties, keeping unbroken relations with other villages for marital, economic and other social requirements.

The situation of each village differs according to the natural zone. For example in the arid zone a few dark huts with a miserable and sickly population live in complete isolation from the rest of their folk. The parched soil affords no scope for cultivation. Few seasonal crops are grown. The dry zone village shifts in relation to the water supply and food crops. The huts are not arranged according to any preconceived plan demanded by custom, climate or necessity. They serve as convenient semi-permanent shelters affording protection from rain and beasts and privacy at night.

In the wet zone the villages bear a more settled appearance and are actually so. Little islands, remote nooks and corners, raised lands, adjoining wet fields invariably form settlements. Owing to the sudden inundations of the lowlands experience has certainly taught the villagers the advantage of settling on elevated land surfaces. Although rare, the writer knows of actual instances where a village may get completely encircled with water from a swelling river as to be almost starved.

However, in the hill zone it is either the valley below or the slope of a hill that affords suitable space for the growth of a village. This necessity compels a certain arrangement in the erection of the huts. The up-country villages are more compact and in close proximity to a flowing stream. The hill tops are seldom inhabited. But the slopes of hills



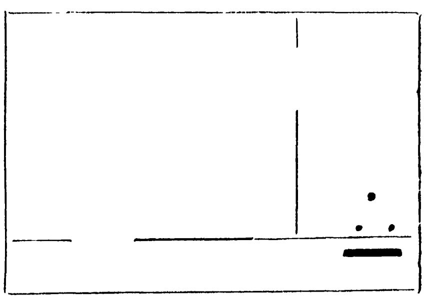
AVERAGE PEASANT HOME

provide commanding positions with a pleasing prospect of the landscape below.

The Sinhalese village derives its name[1] in a variety of ways such as geographical features, names of trees, rivers or adjoining hills. A village derives its name also from its proximity to a prominent landmark. A legend or historical fact may help to give a name to a village. Examples are: Bopitiya, Nagoda, Uragoda, Meegama, Bentota, Gonagala, Beruwala.

Whatever the site may be the house in most instances is determined by the natural environment and status of the owner. The construction may differ, yet the material used in its erection is more or less the product of the environment. The general plan of a Sinhalese village house is not much different one from another. It would be true to say that the local site supplies everything from the commencement up to completion. The house is a direct product of the environment with the result that it agrees well and harmonises with the natural landscape. The timber, mud, and thatch are obtained from the immediate vicinity. But with the introduction of polished tiles, or corrugated iron sheeting the village houses have lost their coolness and harmony Many a house has completely spoilt the landscape and become an eye-sore.

Two small windows and one door would provide all the ventilation and sun-light. An open verandah stretching for the full length of the house contains a raised platform on which the aged grandfather or the males sit and gossip during day or sleep at night. A single door leads to the one and only room used by the women and children for sleeping or resting. This leads to the kitchen which is almost always full of smoke. The hearth consists of three stones whilst above it is a raised reed platform for depositing kitchen utensils, paddy and other possessions. More windows are not favoured.



The walls are built of wattle and daub or planks. The roof is thatched with straw or cadjan. The walls of mud or wood reach right up to the roof. Tables and chairs and wooden furniture were seldom found but

[1] De Lanerolle, Julius—*J. R.A.S.*, Vol. XXXI, No. 83, p. 511.

may be seen in any house today. A mat or a stool are the popular seats. The mats are rolled and hung up. The clothes and jewellery are safely deposited in wooden or reed boxes. Today everyone owns a tin trunk. Mats are used to sleep on the ground. Pillows, which are used, are almost black owing to a thick coating of dirt dust, and oil. Plates, cups and glass-ware are coming to be popularly used. Art is appreciated to the extent that bright colours please the eye. The walls are thus covered with a cosmopolitan collection of royal personages, advertisement figures, almanacs, religious photographs and paper cuttings.

The unclean and insanitary state of the village strike a depressing note at the very first sight. Frequent visits help to remove the original gloom and dislike by a gradual process of blunting the keen sense of an observant critic.

After a short time one begins to complain less and criticise less. many a village by its very natural situation defies modern sanitary overhauling. Poverty and a proverbial conservatism generate a resistance to change. Beyond the actual house few care to keep the place clean. The compound is swept in the morning but that is due to the force of custom. During dry weather the sight is bearable. But during the rainy months both man and domesticated beast vie with each other in dirtying the site. The children dirty the compound and garden. The cattle, poultry and other animals do the same. The wind blown leaves pile up gradually. The grass begins to grow. In some areas the leaches start moving in. Even the grown up men and women use the near by bushes and woods as lavatories. Anchylostomiasis thrives in an atmosphere of this description. Despite the Government regulations for erecting lavatories the people do not use them even if they are erected with Government help.

The very rains that help to cleanse the village contributes to its squalor. Leaches begin to reappear. Reptiles specially snakes are thrown on to the land by rain and floods. The village puts forth fresh vitality but presents a picture of gloom and neglect.

Of the domesticated animals a cat and a dog live in practically every house even though actual ownership is not professed. Specially the dogs and cattle lead a stray life and are a nuisanse and a danger. Cattle are kept by every villager not for the purpose of slaughter or intensive breeding or even milk but to obtain a few cart-bulls. Some keep buffaloes for agricultural purposes. These are less troublesome

since they prefer the muddy fields. The milk is made into curd and eaten with honey. Poultry breeding is despised owing to religious feeling. Nevertheless some villagers keep poultry and practically everyone eats eggs.

Although the domesticated animals are allowed to stray anywhere at their own sweet will the villagers feel greatly offended if any of their cattle or dogs is molested. Despite repeated efforts to prevent the straying of cattle and dogs no improvement can be seen. The householders however are aomewhat attached to their animals since they express genuine sadness at their loss.

The crow is the proverbial scavenger. His work is lightened by dogs and pigs. This phase of the village is fading away. During very recent years an honest effort has been made in a systematic manner to organise sanitary units. A campaign has been launched to teach the children through schools and others through organised exhibitions and lectures the benefits of hygienic living. The Medical Department must be congratulated for its wise policy whereby relief is brought to the home of the peasant instead of his having to trudge miles in search of the Doctor. The ultimate purpose is the eradication of desease to enable the growth of a virile race,

The life in the village is an unimpressive monotonous cycle punctuated by only a religious festival, social event or an annual pilgrimage. A *bali* ceremony or a devil dance supplies light entertainment. The majority of peasants are paddy cultivators. A number of younger men and women do irregular work in the tea and rubber plantations. A stigma was attached to manual labour owing to the traditional system of free service for the king (*rajakariya*) but since recent years more and more are seeking manual paid labour. However, the older generation still prefers farming, two seasons being recognised as *yala* and *maha*. A meda (intermediate) cultivation is also known in certain districts

Although seasonal agricultural labour involves great harships ; no one seems to complain. A certain amount of leisure is enjoyed by the cultivator after sowing and prior to harvesting. This time is usefully spent on some other work that may bring in a little money to tide over lean years to come and for purchasing other equirements than food.

There is no strict line of division between male and female labour. Nevertheless, a sensible understanding prevails as to what is man's work and what is woman's. Despite the physiological disabilities of

1. A very popular food served in the southern province especially as a luxury after the principal meal.

womankind the Sinhalese village depends most on her industry and perseverance for its continuation. She is indeed the breadwinner of the family. Bearing children is an annual event. Rearing them is also her main job. Amidst a heap of other activities these almost regular duties are thrust on her. Obtaining food, gathering firewood, and cooking food are all a part of her regular work. And she certainly manages with the assistance of a member or two of her own household. She is brave and bears all hardships.

Every individual in a household functions as a part of the machinery of labour. The divisions are implied. The average number of children born is about eight of whom the surviving number may be five. In the preceding generation the expectation of life was greater. On the average a family consists of father, mother, aged parents and children. This gives a total of about five. Every one of these plays a part in the household economy.

Being primarily a cultivator the peasant devotes his whole time and attention to agricultural pursuits during the season. The wife and any grown up boys and girls work in the tea or rubber plantations. The growing generation of young men dislike work but prefer a life of ease and indolence. The girls help to increase the income by reaping grass for sale at the boutique. The aged grand parents act as advisers and caretakers whilst the smaller girls look after the infants when the mother is away at work. The smaller boys tend the cattle and roam the village in search of berries and fruits. The majority of boys and girls attend school through compulsion. The parents are fined if the children fail to do so.

It is the wife's duty to prepare the food and run the home. The husband shows himself at mealtime even though he has himself done nothing to help obtain the food. The housewives meet in the woods during fire wood gathering expeditions and gossip around the village well. Many a scandal is broadcast and many a romance takes place at the well. Married women enjoy a fair measure of freedom in their village. Extra-village movements require the husbands' approval. The maidens are not permitted to move about freely. A younger brother or a sister should accompany them. Even the married women are accompanied by a younger companion lest they be alone.

Preferential treatment is meted out to the women as being the delicate sex (*babalat etto*) during journeys and pilgrimages. They are also shown great respect. Whilst on journeys it is the traditional practice for the women to walk behind the men. Lighter loads and the

children are carried by the women. The women are also loved by the men who take a certain pride in seeing their women well dressed and ornamented.

As neighbours the women get on amicably so long as friendly relations prevail. But bitter quarrels ensue during which heated words are exchanged and foul abuse is showered in continuous torrents lasting for hours. The men seldom resort to verbal expressions of hatred. They finish the feuds with a knife in which the early striker invariably succeeds. Quarrels are picked up for the flimsiest cause. Litigation has become a regular pastime in which the villager loses most of his time, money and self-respect.

VI
SOCIAL ORGANISATION

EVEN AS the family is the biological unit the village may be considered the social unit of the Sinhalese national organisation. It is not self-sufficing functionally, economically or socially but it can be so if hard-pressed to it. The united appearance manifests itself in large-scale undertakings. A sentimental attachment binds the members of each village. This gives rise to loyalties in the maintenance of which bitter feuds take place between villages. This unity is clearly expressed during festival occasions and religious processions. In games, in processions (*peraheras*), and calamities the group consciousness predominates. The fact that whole villages were bestowed on nobles and brave leaders in recognition of services proves the realisation of its unity.

As stated earlier, for harmonious functioning each village was bound up with one or more villages either in the vicinity or at a distance. Such a mutual interdependency regulated the needs and maintained co-operation and association. The strongest of these bonds was marriage. Other functional groups living in other villages fulfilled certain functions such as laundering and devil dancing. These duties belonged to certain castes. Certain villages are still in the habit of inter-marrying to such a degree as to establish strong reminiscences of a system of dual organisation.

People of the same caste inhabited a village. It is not possible to say how this practice originated. Was it due to one original settler, or founder or settlement of the same caste of people giving birth to a village ? Migration of a few families from another site may have later resulted in the growth of a whole village which, though long separated, maintained their former relations despite the distance.

Caste, in the Sinhalese social structure is an ancient institution which today has lost both the rigidity and shades of distinction as found in the Indian system. Possibly the four main Aryan grouping into Brahmin, Warrior, Trader and Slave was accepted in early Ceylon. Later, other influences reacted in eliminating the ancient stigmas and helped to forget them. A change in values ushered in new distinctions that

appeared under euphemistic titles or foreign linguistic words.

Caste has been organised on the principle of function with the king or chief as the central head. Certain peoples who were originally grouped together and followed a certain art, function, or profession came afterwards to be known by the name of the art, function or profession. The respectability, superiority and precedence attached to each case fluctuated with the importance and value affixed to each by social convention or regal authority. From times of old Sinhalese society consisted of agricultural peasants, the chief farmer being nominally the king himself. The Brahmins assisted in spiritual, constitutional and advisory capacities. The merchants of diverse kinds were also known. The fourth class consisted of slaves and menials. The agriculturists since they tended to be possessed of economic power increased their numbers and acquired power. They became the warriors and hence the rulers. With political authority and majesty there developed a superiority of the persons belonging to these circles. These became the chief castes.

Below is a list of the main castes as they function today:—

1. Badahela
2. Bedde
3. Bandara
4. Batgama
5. Berawa
6. Durawa
7. Durayi
8. Embetta
9. Gadi
10. Gahala
11. Gattaru
12. Goigama
13. Hakuru
14. Halagama
15. Hinna
16. Huluvali
17. Hunna
18. Karawa
19. Lokuru
20. Navandanna
21. Nekati
22. Oli
23. Padu
24. Panna
25. Panikka
26. Patti
27. Porokara
28. Rada
29. Rodi
30. Salagama
31. Vanni
32. Vahampura
33. Bharata
34. Lansi
35. Miko
36. Eurasian
37. Kapiri
38. Mukkaru
39. Paravaru
40. Ahikuntaka
41. Waggai
42. Ja
43. Matakkala

The strict observances connected with caste tend to be forgotten in the cities and towns during social inter-course although in private life the details are observed. Specially in marriage[1] caste distinctions have to be observed. Yet among the lower classes such restrictions regarding commensality and connubium are fast disappearing. Town life affords the best escape from despondency and depression due to caste inferiority in village circles.

The Government ostensibly discourages the perpetuation of caste observances under a cloak of secret preferential treatment for some castes in certain offices. This course of procedure may be justified on principles of democratic rule according to the majority wish. Law and order cannot be effectively maintained in a village if the people come to realize the social position of the official is lower than their own. On this score the Englishman (*European*) has been at an added advantage in that he belonged to the ruling class, had no obvious caste inferiority and was generally a higher official than the Ceylonese.

In the village caste is even now an active force deciding and controlling its affairs. Since each individual knows each other's caste distinctions each one expects preferential and respectful treatment according to the rank. That the system is in such active force could be known from the following. During the many tours of ethnological research into the rural parts of the land the writer has miserably failed in his attempts to make a so called lower caste individual sit down on a chair in the presence of the Goigama neighbours.

In spite of all such embarrassments and awkward situations the distinct functions of the different castes are carried out without upsetting the balance of village life. Other villages co-operate. There is co-ordination between the different functions of each caste. The respective caste comes in at the due time and place. Traditional functions should never be overlooked on occasions of a ceremonial nature. The society expects it of them and the people invite the functionaries to undertake such obligations. The dhobies, drummers, and other craftsmen render the essential services of the village organisation and each of these constitutes an integral part of the whole system. With the march of time and progress modern ideas are quickly spreading in villages where the traditional manner of life prevailed until very late. The establishment of new institutions and the encouragement of western methods are combining to disintegrate

1. At marriage the parents and even the most educated partners are concerned about the distinct caste grade of each other. Parents often ostracise the children who violate the rules and traditional customs regarding favourable unions.

the older system. The ideas of equality are loosening the firm ties of mutual regard. Political demagogy has removed the last remaining psychological predisposition for a continuity of the harmonious cycle of ancient village life.

Caste or "*Varga*" [1] can be best understood if one's family name (*cognomen*) is known. This is the *ge* name or family name[2]. It has very little significance today but in ancient times the *ge* name had a real meaning and gave one the idea of a man's family history. Caste and family command great respect and position in every village.[3] There are various grades [4] in the same caste; some being higher and others relatively lower. Besides there are a hundred minor shades of difference. There are families who are believed to belong to or descend from the same ancestor. Yet during the course of years the fluctuations of fortune affect some families as to be of no consequence in society. Finally the superiority of caste alone remains. Most of the families, who presume to belong to the nobility owe their social position to political changes that ushered in a new or foreign dynastic rule. These have been treacherous and disloyal to the old government and consequently found favour with the new. But for their opportune exploits they would still be classed as humble peasants or low caste inferiors.

The *ge* name (*vasagama, pelentiya, mulnama*) preserves an historical record of the succession of titular ranks, and honorifics added to a family in the course of its long descent. By an examination of these family names it may be possible to trace connections between scattered groups. Their chief role today is in marriage when the family names help to identify the respectability of the new party. These names are also being used as sur-names. A man may marry a girl lower than himself in caste gradation but the girls are always given away to superior caste men. Higher social status and family connections can be won by the peculiar system of dowry whereby the rich girls are married to men of good social standing, the majority of them being highly-salaried government officers. This enables the rich girls to get married easily and well whilst their educated, goodlooking poor sisters are left at times to pine away and die as spinsters despite their high caste and aristocratic bearing.

The feudal system[5] of the Sinhalese is a thing of the past. Slight

1. Perera, E. W.—*Sinhalese Names Plans and Titles—Antiquary*, Oct. 1910
2. Reimers, E—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXXI, No. 83, p. 437.
3. Very few of the present generation live up to it.
4. There are 12 main divisions of Goigama, 9 Karawas, 10 Durawas.
5. Reimers, E.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXXI, p. 17, No. 81.

traces of it may be evidenced in ancient temples and Kandyan provinces. Caste can function effectively only within such an enforced system where a central authority must be able to exercise full dictatorial power. When this person is the king himself it becomes very easy. Today few families still function as serfs attached to temples or families in return for certain privileges enjoyed by them; these being the use of land or incomes from it. No trace of this is left in the lowlands except where successive families serve certain others as their masters. The annual Kandy Perahera is still organised according to the feudal system.

The Sinhalese kinship terms are designed to suit a classificatory system in which persons who stand in the same relationship to another are addressed by the same term by him. For example the mother's sisters will all be called by the same term by her children. But for purposes of identification and convenience of reference in their absence various descriptive epithets are added to the names. They are the names of the village or adjectives like small, medium, big, light, fair or dark. Sometimes also a pet name comes to stay.

The juniors are not allowed to address the senior relatives by name. By custom certain relations are forbidden to intermarry. Such relationships could be at once discerned by the term of address. Although legally there is no objection to persons marrying one's mother's sisters' children or father's brothers' children the social organisation disapproves of such unions as being incestuous. Such an act is condemned as the marriage between brothers and sisters since in the opinion of the Sinhalese the same blood flows in the veins of these parties. However the ortho-cousin marriage forbidden by custom and tradition is entered into by relations either out of love without the parents' consent or with parents' connivance for retaining property and money in the same family.

The following is a short list of relationship terms :—

1. Self .. .. .. *Mama*
2. Father .. .. .. *Piya*
3. Mother .. .. .. *Mau*
4. Father's father .. .. .. *Muththa*
5. Father's mother .. .. .. *Achchy*
6. Father's younger brother .. .. *Baappa*
7. Father's younger brother's wife .. *Punchi Amma*
8. Father's younger brother's son .. *Sahodaraya*
9. Father's younger brother's son's wife .. *Nena*
10. Father's younger brother's daughter .. *Sahodari*

11. Father's younger brother's daughter's husband .. .. .. *Massina*
12. Father's elder brother .. .. *Mahappa*
13. Father's elder brother's wife .. *Mahamma*
14. Father's elder brother's son .. .. *Sahodaraya*
15. Father's elder brother's son's wife .. *Nena*
16. Father's elder brother's daughter .. *Sahodari*
17. Father's elder brother's daughter's husband *Massina*
18. Self's father's elder sister .. .. *Nenda*
19. Self's father's elder sister's husband .. *Mama*
20. Self's father's elder sister's daughter .. *Nena*
21. Self's father's elder sister's daughter's husband .. .. .. *Sahodaraya*
22. Self's father's elder sister's son .. *Massina*
23. Self's father's elder sister's son's wife .. *Sahodari*
24. Self's father's younger sister .. .. *Nenda*
25. Self's father's younger sister's husband .. *Mama*
26. Self's father's younger sister's son .. *Massina*
27. Self's father's younger sister's son's wife .. *Sahodari*
28. Self's father's younger sister's daughter .. *Nena*
29. Self's father's younger sister's daughter's husband .. .. .. *Sahodaraya*
30. Self's mother's mother .. .. *Achchy*
31. Self's mother's father .. .. *Atha, Mutha*
32. Self's mother's younger brother .. *Podi Mama*
33. Self's mother's younger brother's wife .. *Podi Nenda*
34. Self's mother's younger brother's son .. *Massina*
35. Self's mother's younger brother's son's wife *Sahodari*
36. Self's mother's younger brother's daughter *Nena*
37. Self's mother's younger brother's daughter's husband .. .. .. *Sahodaraya*
38. Self's mother's elder brother .. *Loku Mama*
39. Self's mother's elder brother's wife .. *Loku Nenda*
40. Self's mother's elder brother's son .. *Massina*
41. Self's mother's elder brother's son's wife .. *Sahodari*
42. Self's mother's elder brother's daughter .. *Nena*
43. Self's mother's elder brother's daughter's husband .. .. .. *Sahodaraya*
44. Self's mother's elder sister .. .. *Loku Amma*
45. Self's mother's elder sister's husband .. *Mahappa*

46.	Self's mother's elder sister's daughter ..	*Sahodari*
47.	Self's mother's sister's daughter's husband	*Massina*
48.	Self's mother's elder sister's son ..	*Sahodaraya*
49.	Self's mother's elder sister's son's wife ..	*Nena*
50.	Self's mother's younger sister.. ..	*Kudamma*
51.	Self's mother's younger sister's husband ..	*Baappa*
52.	Self's mother's younger sister's son ..	*Sahodaraya*
53.	Self's mother's younger sister's son's wife..	*Nena*
54.	Self's mother's younger sister's daughter ..	*Sahodari*
55.	Self's mother's younger sister's daughter's husband	*Massina*

Marriage between cross-cousins is preferred to any other. In fact it was obligatory though not enforced now-a-days. In fact it is a union between a Nena and Massina *i.e.*, between father's sister's children and mother's brother's children that constitutes the ideal marriage in Sinhalese society. Now-a-days marriages are arranged between unrelated families by friends as go-betweens or professional brokers.

Little that could be called Sinhalese in the sphere of law and custom[1] remains now a days. It is true that Kandyan law[2] is still recognised and applicable. Nevertheless, Roman-Dutch law and English law apply to most of the cases. The customs are also fast disappearing. Land tenure in the uplands is settled according to Kandyan law. Certain local institutions like Gansabhas for deciding smaller cases are being employed, and even oath by ordeal is sometimes practised.

1. Parnatella, T. B.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXI, 1908.
Hayley, F. A.—*Laws and Customs of the Sinhalese.*

VII

FAMILY AND CRISES OF LIFE

MARRIAGE IS indeed a great event in one's life as well as in the function of the village, the excitement and interest varying in accordance with the importance of the uniting houses concerned. It is a social event. The majority of village folk though completely overwhelmed by the formalities, superstitions and customary practices traditionally attached to the occasion take matters very lightly. Some enter matrimony to oblige the parents or relatives. Others do it as a matter of course. There are still some who depend on it for a living without being in the least prepared for the future. To them it is a business venture.

Village youth fall in and out of love with the rapidity of modern film-stars. Such romances are begun around the village well or in the temple grounds, these being the spots not prohibited. Otherwise the young girls are not permitted to venture out of home even if chaperoned by a younger relative or an aged female.

The silent admiration aroused by the closer sight grows into deeper affection leading to the final decision. On occasions the young lovers see each other and even indulge in a mild flirtation. On no account will they be left alone unless by a clever ruse or complete stealth they plan a rendezvous. Not every such romance ends in a union. Paternal disapproval ends many romances. Sometimes the lovers run away thereby creating a perfect scandal.

Among the peasants there is no question or fuss about dowry. Man and woman become partners of a union which continues owing to mutual effort. As people go up the ladder of society and power many a complicated problem arises. In no case is the education of the person taken into consideration. Wealth, position and family decide the unions of the rich. A strong tendency prevails among the middle upper classes not to marry girls from the so called "high society" as they fear such a union may end up in divorce. The degree of denationalisation reached by this class is beyond any reason and dangerous to progress. Women are not at all conservative in this respect. It is the

men of the middle class who are conservatives and would in the end preserve the cultural institutions, traditional beliefs and customary practices. In Ceylon it is the man who is national and not the woman. All marriages, however contracted, have to be legalised by official registration since only then would the government recognise its validity. But there are still unions without registration.

The Sinhalese are permitted only a monogamous[1] form of marriage. One man can marry only one woman and *vice versa.* Dutiful husbands abide by this law in all sincerity but there are men who satisfy the polygamous[2] instincts of the animal within by recourse to immoral practices and secret unions. The women are less prone to such loose behaviour.[3] Despite the promiscuity secretly enjoyed by men the chastity of the women is jealously guarded by them. Except in the upper grade of society married life on the whole is happy and at least contented. This is more the result of preparedness on the part of the woman to give in and accept everything as the working of *Karma.* Seldom does she assert herself.

The marriage union consists of two forms ; *diga* and *binna.* These systems prevail in the Kandyan districts with all the ancient rigour. The commoner type is the *digha* where the girl is given away. The *binna*[4] type, where the man comes to settle in the home of the bride has attached to it many obligations and was a necessary outcome of the social need for the management of property. However, in the lowlands the *binna* form of marriage is held in contempt as a shameful action which no respectable young man would brook since the position of the man becomes subordinate to that of the woman. He is a dependant living with his mother-in-law. Thus the man comes up against another problem.

Today, the majority of married couples dislike living at the parental home in any way dependent on the parents of the man or woman. The tendency is to establish a separate home if not immediately, at least after the birth of the first child. Many factors contribute to such a mental predisposition not the least of which is the behaviour of the mother-in-law. She occupies the same unenviable position as that of

1. But both polygamy and polyandry prevailed as a recognised custom. See *Epigraphia Zeylanica,* Vol. IV, pp 167, 169. Ievers, R. W.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XVI, p 1892. Knox, Percival, Gardiner and Tennant also refer to polyandry in Ceylon.

2. Neville, H.—*Taprobanian*, III p 85, *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. III, pp 175, 241.

3. Westermark............pp 225, 226. 228, quotes Pridham—*Historical Account of Ceylon*, p 250 that wife lending occurs. As far as the writer is aware. Officials resorted to the practice of cohabiting with the wives of their assistants, subordinates or other officials in return for which special favours were shown to the husband and other relations.

4. Hutton, J. H —Caste in India, p. 139.

a mother-in-law in all peasant societies.

A typical marriage is contracted and completed as follows.

An old relative, family friend or a "broker" who knows a girl or young man gets busy with a view to arranging a marriage either for helping the parties or gain for himself. The broker is always a business man bent on making money from both parties. Such a person suggests to the parents or the man that such and such a case deserves consideration. If so and so's child could be arranged it would be good. The man is described as the ideal Sinhalese and the girl as pretty as a picture. He attributes to them qualities and virtues, and wealth that do not exist. After comparing the horoscopes and discussing the dowry a visit is arranged. The young man is aware of everything but the girl remains ignorant till the very last day. Every effort is made to present a picture different to the ordinary on the day of the initial visit of the man. The show must be fine and the impression grand. The mark of novelty is impressed on everything and everyone, cutlery, crockery, dress, etc. The neighbours and the hiring shops only know the secret. Servants are dressed up for the occasion. Special food is prepared.

As a rule the bridegroom and party consisting of his father, uncles and brothers visit in the afternoon. When no well-to-do relatives are available friends of good position accompany the party. The visitors and inmates sit in the verandah until at times everyone's patience is exhausted. The appearance of the girl is a gradual process. Then the visitors are taken in. Through doors and windows the female inmates peep on. After much delay the girl steps into the midst of the gathering and is introduced to the visitors by the father, mother or uncle. Pale with excitement uneasily she sits not in her natural ease or beauty but in an assumed pose. She talks hardly a word. The general trend of the conversation deals with the weather and general topics of the locality. Still the girl waits embarrassed and uneasy. The ordeal is not yet over. Light refreshments begin to appear in the drawing room or the party is conducted to a table laden with refreshments. From now on action quickens. After tea the party leaves with formal courtesies. The ordeal is over and the girl heaves a sigh of relief.

No finality can be reached until various details of dowry are settled between the parties concerned. Much bargaining is resorted to almost to breaking point. In all these long-winding discussions and detailed examination of specific problems the girl is never asked her views, likes and dislikes. Even if she dislikes she has to accept the man of parental choice.

Many are the cases where out of the promised lakhs of rupees and extensive acres only the girl materialises. But, then the negotiations have advanced too far to permit a light-hearted rejection lest the good repute of an aggrieved party suffer. Nevertheless the marriage is contracted with a silent resolution to have nothing to do with such relatives in future.

When a final settlement is reached regarding the preliminary details an auspicious day is obtained from an astrologer for giving notice of marriage.

On this day rings are exchanged in the presence of near relatives at the house of the bride. Within three months of this date the marriage has to be solemnised. The wedding day is also fixed for an auspicious moment.

The progressive stages are :

(1) The first visit.

(2) Registration of names.

(3) Marriage day—*Poruva* ceremony ;
Marriage ceremony ;
Signing the Register.

(4) Processional accompaniment of the girl (now replaced by the honeymoon.)

(5) Bathing.

(6) Visiting.

On occasions of a ceremonial nature when families gather together questions of precedence and commensality create complications that at times end up in permanent dissociation. Certain relatives look for opportunities to create trouble. Others express the offended pride by refusing participation or final acquiesence in the marriage. The older relatives like to play a leading role even though their case is not deserving. At the bottom of such pre-nuptial disagreements are the women whose vanity is often responsible for starting quarrels. Non-participation and passive resistance of sections of the family circle add the finishing touches to practically every Sinhalese wedding of almost every class, caste and creed.

A point that deserves special mention is the undue expenditure incurred by the contracting parties and their relatives. This is out of all proportion to their actual ability to spend. Most of this expenditure goes to meet the expenses of new clothing. In particular the poorer folk spend lavishly, unreasonably and beyond means. Goods are pawned, properties mortgaged and loans raised for the sole purpose

of outdoing so and so. Beyond the advertisement value of such a show there is no material advantage. It is true a few gifts and cash presents are received as such are expected from those who received from them. These hardly meet the cost and practically in every case the period following a wedding is one of great hardship to the full circle of relations and friends. The new couple feel this most. But repentance comes too late. Even those who profess to believe in simple weddings blindly follow tradition when it comes to their turn.

After the wedding the couple leave on their honeymoon. The custom that prevailed till very recently everywhere but is now restricted to the villages was to take the bride home (conduct in procession). About three days are spent on the honeymoon (or at home) after which the couple return to the husband's parental home. Here an indelicate and almost indecent ceremony called the *salu beleema*[1] (examination of the cloth) is conducted by the mother-in-law. The first bath is taken with much ceremony on return to the bride's home (*hisadiyata yama*) if the bride is conducted to the home of the husband. Those who go on a honeymoon do not observe this part of the ceremony.

Usually the couple return after a sojourn of about three days to the home of the bridegroom whose parents or a near relative organise a reception for them. The closest friends and nearest relatives are also invited. The period of visiting the friends and relations takes up a good part of the time of the new couple as omissions or late visits may be unjustly interpreted as insults or neglects. The couple take up residence at one of their parental homes or prefer to live in a separate house by themselves. Very seldom do couples live with parents after the birth of the first child.

Meanwhile, if within the first couple of months the girl has not conceived many constructions are put on the delay and parents feel a little alarmed. The husband himself begins to wonder. Generally the first child is born within the first year or so. As soon as the girl realises that she has conceived and the surest sign is the stoppage of menstruation the news is conveyed to the husband and then to her mother. The mother or whoever is in her position takes special care of the *enceinte* girl and warns her to abstain from various foods such as pineapples, yams, and jelly fish. In general the category of "heaty" foods must be avoided. Where no close female relative exists close friends are consulted. The well-to-do consult a doctor.

1. Virginity was an essential pre-requisite for a successful marriage among the Sinhalese. Confirmation of this was established after the examination of the cloth spread on the nuptial couch on the first night.

Morning fever and sickness continue for some time and the girl loses weight. An interesting phenomenon is the prenatal longings during pregnancy which is supposed to be those of the embryo expressed through the mother. In the majority of cases this takes the form of longing for certain foods. The girl attends to her normal duties until the very last month. The changing physical condition is accepted with pride by some, but the town folk express a certain shyness about the pregnant state. The dreams of the girl during this period are considered ominous as throwing light about the new arrival.

Religious beliefs help to infuse a deal of confidence during this period. And religious duties are not neglected. Vows[1] are made to guardian deities to be fulfilled at a specified Devale in a particular manner if the desires are fulfilled. A son is always preferred to a daughter. A daughter when she grows up becomes a responsibility and a problem. She needs a dowry. Besides, there is such a high premium on virginity and chaste living that the parents are over-worried lest their daughters after marriage disappoint the husbands and thereby earn a disrepute for them. Charms are directed against evil magic and spirits. *Balis* are performed to invoke the blessings of the planetary deities. *Pirit* is chanted. The girl is advised to be of a happy frame of mind and be religious minded.

When labour pains commence the patient is taken to a separate room with a few experienced women in attendance. The village midwife is immediately summoned. She is an experienced matron without any medical training. In towns the maternity cases are admitted to nursing homes or hospitals. In the villages easy cases pass off without trouble and anxiety. In difficult cases a great deal of anxiety is felt on account of black magic. The Kattadiya is invited to the scene. Various charms are performed, *mantrams* recited, limes cut and a coconut[2] is offered to the father to be split at the door of the labour room. For spiritual sustenance *pirit* is chanted by laymen from outside the room while a string is held by the patient. The favourite suttas are the *Atanatiya* and *Angulimala*. Medical relief is also provided by administering medicinal drinks. Every thing is done to save the mother and the child. Finally the patient is taken to hospital or a doctor summoned. Fear of death during child-birth has an added dread in that such persons who die with child undelivered will be

1. Neville, H.—*Taprobanian*, 1887, p 47.

2. If the coconut breaks easily into two equal halves no fears need be harboured. If the female portion is bigger than the male the birth of a girl is to be expected and *vice versa*.

re-born as a *Bodilima*[1] whose groaning may haunt the neighbourhood and whose presence may visit the household with disaster.

The inevitable reaction to the news of the birth is the question from the lips of all waiting outside the room. "Is it a boy?" The mother is also told the good news and shown the baby. The baby is bathed in a clay vessel, basin or an arecanut leaf vessel. It is given mother's milk mixed with gold.[2] The exact time of birth is recorded[3] for purposes of casting the horoscope.

The mother is fed on ginger and allowed strongly-chilied curries. The room is disinfected by burning castor oil and *asafotoeda*. The abdomen is wrapped with a thick long sheet.

The mother and child are kept indoors until a very auspicious moment is fixed after a period of ten or fourteen days. This is an occasion for rejoicing and feasting. It is customary to take the child to the temple or devale on its first visit.[4] On this occasion rice cakes are cooked. Milk rice is prepared. A parcel of sweets is offered to the priests and the deities together with the vowed objects.

From birth to the first feeding[5] of rice is a period of about a year during which anxiety is expressed by the mother on whose shoulders mainly rest the burden of bringing up the offspring. The difficulties are increased owing to illnesses like malaria. However, she has to manage with the assistance of aged relatives or a young child since the father remains out on work. She, too, supplements the economy by work during spare hours.

The horoscope is cast by the family astrologer who lives in the village. The initial letters the names should have are given by him. He also predicts the good future of the infant. The elaborate ancient ceremony of name giving is falling into disuse. The family name (*ge* name) remains the same whilst the individual name is given. The name of a well-known relative or friend is kept in view. At the present day all the names are given at the time of registration. Any name which suits the fancy of the parents is given. Corrupted forms of European first

1. A Sinhalese belief that the shrill mournful cry heard in the jungles at night is that of *bodilima*. This resembles the cry of a woman in labour pain.
2. *Rań-kiri-katagema* actually means the oral application of a bit of human milk in which gold has been mixed. This is done almost immediately after birth and is believed to give strength and beauty.
3. In ancient days the time is recorded by cutting a banana stem laterally and then calculating the growth vertically.
4. *Devaleta Vedima*—the admission to the devale. On this day all the vows relating to the birth are fulfilled and the deities are thanked.
5. *Indul-kata-gema*—the first feeding at which all sorts of foods are placed before the infant is a festive occasion. The child is allowed a choice.

names[1] were popular during the last generation. The fashion today is to give historical Sinhalese names. The simpler older Sinhalese names are popular with the lower castes.[2] Indian names are also popular.

The early years of the child are spent with a little girl, or an aged grandparent as convenience or other circumstances may dictate. The time is passed in telling stories or singing lullabies and folk-songs.[3]

Ceylon babies were seldom given animal milk or artificial foods. The mother breast-fed the baby as long as she was physically able to do so. It is, today that inferior non-nutritious foods only in preserved form are freely availed of. The peasant mother did not find any inconvenience in suckling the baby on any occasion at any place. It is a most touching sight, and a common one at that, to witness a mother feeding a baby on the road side, quite unconcerned of the world around. She feeds her as the child cries and not according to any system. This practice becomes rather a nuisance. Great difficulty is experienced to wean the baby from suckling even after 2, 3 or 4 years. The application of bitter substances[4] on the nipple has to be resorted to in certain cases.

In the village all children grow up together without too much care or attention being paid them from the moment they can look after themselves. This is about four or five years.[5] With the advance of years what little attention was shown is also denied. They live a free life free from too much parental control. They roam the whole village and get acquainted with the people of the village. As children they get well acquainted with the village lore and the topography of the area.

At about the age of five a child is given its first lesson[6] in reading and writing. A village elder or a learned man or the temple priest acts as the teacher. Sometimes the father imparts the first instruction. Schooling is compulsory under Government regulations. The parents are punished for transgressing this law. The majority of village children leave school at fourteen but a few continue higher studies. The system of education is not planned as it affords very little scope for the Sinhalese or Tamil educated. The child who does not attend an English School has practically no future since higher education is denied

1. *George, Haramanis, Peter, Charlis etc.* ... ... for males
Misi, Jane, Alice, Katherine etc. ... ... for females

2. *Payodari, Sirimal-etana, Ehalamali* are some of these.

3. Sinhalese nursery rhymes are very popular in all grades of Sinhalese society and one may hear these songs almost in every house where there is an infant.

4. *Kaduru*, Bitter Gourd, Bitter Opium.

5. The writer knows of cases where a girl of four or five years looks after the infant alone in a house whilst the rest have gone on their daily work.

6. *Akuru-kiyaweema.*

to him. The average child of well-to-do parents attend English schools in suburbs or towns. The highest reward of a successful school career is considered to be a place in the Civil Service. It is a great loss to the country since very few evince any genuine interest in research or search for true knowledge.

The age of attaining puberty is about twelve for the boys and thirteen in the case of girls. This change in the physical and physiological status of the individual is passed over without even notice in the case of boys whilst in the case of girls it is a crisis affecting her whole future and behaviour in society. The first menstruation marks the beginning of this change. This incident occurs at night usually and on detection or receipt of news the patient is secluded in an isolated hut or as a matter of course in the corner of a separate room unseen by any males. Only the females are allowed to see her. She is never left alone for one single moment as she is most susceptible to danger from evil influences of spirits and demons. The washerwoman is summoned and she supplies her a change of clothes daily. An auspicious moment and a day are fixed up by consulting an astrologer who also predicts her future. The washerwoman bathes her at dawn with due ritual[1] and ushers her out. It is an occasion for rejoicing. The girl has to perform certain duties and pay respect to her elders. She feels quite shy on this occasion but very soon regains her proper place in society. The whole village comes to know of the event at least on this day as a result of the playing on the *rabana*. The mother or an aged aunt or the washerwoman herself advises her and explains to her the seriousness of her changed status. From this time onwards she is considered a big woman and the parents plan to arrange a marriage.

From the time of leaving school the boys begin to wander about in search of employment or remain idle. Some settle down to a life in the village as 'prentices' to the father or uncle with a view to continuing the traditional vocation in life. Others seek new avenues at home or elsewhere in accordance with their education, ability, influence and social position. Government service, estates, and commercial institutions absorb a great many of the youth. Of these Government service is held in great regard as it alone affords the permanent security and hope of wealth. Few return to, or stay on, the land. Agriculture and farming are thereby neglected. When all avenues fail an attempt is made to go away or back to the land. Some of these migrate to larger towns attracted by the lure of riches and the life of the town. It certainly is

1. She is entitled to the soiled cloths, rice, cakes and cash.

a significant fact that whenever one looks about in out of the way cities one finds a man from Matara or Galle settled down and doing well. The Southern Province supplies adventurers who are scattered not only throughout the Island but also in foreign lands like Africa and Malaya.[1]

The Sinhalese peasant can bear up great hardships not the least of which is illness. Malaria is endemic. Other diseases are also common and most of them help to sap the vitality that is already impaired by meagre food. Nevertheless, his fatalistic outlook combined with the evil influences beyond control affords soothing consolation. Illness is the result of a variety of causes some direct and others indirect; some known and others unknown. These are the disturbances of the humours, evil spirits, curses, retribution and natural causes. Particular fear and anxiety are shown in cases of illnesses suspected as induced by Black Magic.[2] The natural causes may be removed by treatment at the hands of a doctor. A system of medical treatment by a reference to ancient prescriptions prevails. The Western qualified medical practitioner is also consulted. The unknown causes will have to be dealt with by counter magic and an elaborate, most complicated accretion of remedies are resorted to. The former system is practised by *vedaralas;* for the latter the *bali eduras* and *kattadiyas* are responsible. Failing all these remedies divine intervention is prayed for by the offering of vows to particular guardian deities of the *Devales.*[3] If, after all these attempts death is suspected as imminent religious rites are administered at the death bed in order to prepare the patient for the coming end and help him also in the world after death.

Although death is the final end of the physical frame it is only an aspect of change in the cycle of transmigration. On passing away in death from this human existence the individual is either re-incarnated in another form or remains in suspended animation to be re-born. To the peasant at least death is a temporary cessation of a continuous struggle for existence if not a termination. Every death is surrounded with superstition and ceremonial.

No day is considered inauspicious for one to die or be born but the dead are not disposed of on Fridays and Tuesdays. If the morrow happens to be a Tuesday or Friday steps are taken for preserving[4] the dead body until the day after. Superstition plays a chief part and

1. The substratum of the present Maldivian population is most certainly a Sinhalese element.
2. See under "Bali, Tovil and Huniyam" for more details.
3. Vishnu, Kataragama, Saman, Nata and Pattini.
4. Salt and vinegar are used for preserving dead bodies and the well-to-do resort to embalming according to western methods.

omens and dreams a very upsetting role in a funeral house. Pictures hung on the wall are turned to face the wall. Candles are lit and the face is tied up, whilst the females keep on wailing. All the relatives are informed and everyone talks only about the good of the deceased.

The body is washed by near relatives or by others of special castes in the presence of near relatives. A favourite dress is put on the body, all jewellery being removed in the case of females. Then the body is placed in a coffin placed in a central position for all to see. After the friends and relations pay their respect a little before removal for disposal the lid is nailed. This is a sad moment when weeping and wailing reach a climax. The near relatives bear the coffin to the cemetery or place it in a hearse to be taken there. The funeral procession is preceded by music[1] which deeply moves any heart by its plaintive wailing tone. Only the close relatives are permittd by custom to meddle with the encased coffin. A special pyre of wood is erected for cremating a body and only the rich can afford this expense. In cremations, the grandson, a nephew or a son-in-law sets fire to the pyre by walking three times around it. If the body is buried every one present drops a handful of earth into the grave.

Either at home or by the grave-side the last religious rites are performed by priests. This ritual is known as the *pansukula pinkama.*[2] Christians have a short sermon by the grave or in a church at the cemetery.

After obsequies the friends and relations are expected to return to the funeral house for partaking of light refreshments. The visitors part gradually and the house returns to normal in the course of time. Of course certain customs have to be observed. A light is kept burning in the deceased's room. On the sixth night after death a Bhikkhu is invited to deliver a short sermon to the household and on the seventh day large number of Bhikkhus are treated for a mid-day meal.[3] On the previous night a light is also placed in a separate small enclosure together with food. At the alms-giving the favourite dishes and other foods liked by the deceased are offered. The Bhikkhus deliver a short sermon, and eulogy and offer merit to all dead and present. The spirits of the dead person may be in dire need of such merit to gain emancipation from a temporary state of suffering. Three months' later another alms-giving is arranged and this becomes an annual event.

1. *Hevisi*—consist of a few wind, and percussion instruments and are played by people belonging to a special caste. Today band music has taken the place of the traditional music. The poor classes cannot afford any music and do without any.

2 A short ceremony during which a sermon is delivered on death and impermanence. This greatly helps to console the bereaved and divert their attention from death. Eulogistic orations are also delivered and white cloth is offered to the Bhikkhus. Water is poured out into a vessel till it overflows whilst a stanza is repeated thrice.

3 *Sangika Danaya*—an alms-giving in memory of a dead person at which at least five bhikkhus must be present.

VIII
SEXUAL LIFE

SINHALESE FOLK-LORE has preserved sufficient information for reconstructing a few traits of the sexual life of the Sinhalese. There is evidence that even the kings were involved in certain romantic incidents which neither their status nor civil condition influenced in preventing. Apart from the legends of the 17th and 18th centuries two myths of sufficient antiquity are still current. These deal with incest.[1] The subject is that of brother and sister incest. Certain legends, stories, poems and other anecdotes express in some detail certain aspects of sex life. Trivial love affairs are jokingly alluded to. Sudden affections also found fulfilment even at the risk of losing a kingdom[2] and throne or life.[3] All these tend to prove that sex elements were as vigorously active in the past as in the present although many may under-rate their intensity owing to the fact that the people were Buddhists. Ancient sexual life of the Sinhalese has yet to be written for its importance to be appreciated. At present very little is known.

Sex finds expression from the beginning of human life up to its very end although expressed unconsciously by mere instinct in the case of infants. The problem of differentiating actions of a sexual nature from accidental happenings will always remain a difficult one. Even at the early age sexual impulse cannot be denied in the child.[4] The writer himself has observed how satisfied an infant appears whilst beating its urine and excreta. They also express joy at meddling with their sexual parts. Sucking the finger and the thumb and the big toe is most common. Village infants who are mostly left to themselves find freedom of expression whilst the others' actions are inhibited.

Such unintentional actions tend also to be directed away from self towards another object of pleasure. These objects afford temporary joy whilst engaged in playful activities or at sight. Up to about the

1. Wijesekera N. D.—Man, Nos. 13, 14, 1943—*Giridevige Kathava and Naga Mala ale.*
2. *Story of Prince Sali and Asokamala.*
3. *Story of Kelani Tissa.*
4. Freud observes that acts of playing with excreta and urine, meddling with sexual parts are definitely sexual.

age of five the babies are allowed to play about at will. A closer observation of the behaviour of the children would certainly establish an intentional sexual attraction between the males and the females manifested by their actions. Feeling each other's body, seeing each other's limbs and kissing are some of the observed facts. Also some disinterestedness in the parents during this period is also a negative evidence.

Then begins a period of shyness, silence and retirement. It is during this stage that instincts and emotions once allowed free play begin to be inhibited by example, advice and fear. Most thoughts and actions are repressed but find expression in dreams and play. In fact many emotions yet find an outlet in secret. Profane kissing and even sexual enjoyments help to relieve the mind of a deal of the suppressed emotions.

The children mature earlier than in colder countries and the sense of curiosity develops earlier. This synchronises with the age of wishing to cover their persons. In matters of sex the village children are not so inquisitive as their urban brothers and sisters since they find more opportunities of seeing the exposed limbs when the elders work, bathe, or rest. The villagers seldom resort to undue prudery. Many occasions present the children with opportunities of satisfying their inquiring mind and curious eye. Such opportunities are denied to the urban children and the emotions urge them to seek for opportunities. It is a very trying phase of the child's life specially when it is complicated by the attainment of puberty. The development of the faculties and the knowledge of sex release the emotional currents which must be diverted in proper channels. But society precludes the physiological functions and the biological processes and hence errant paths have to be sought for chanelling the sexual impulses that continuously seek fulfilment. The organs of the body develop towards the same end. But the young must normally wait, there being no pre-marital relationships permitted by society or otherwise resort to secret fulfilment of the sexual urge. Or perversion comes to their aid.

At the present day girls and boys know more about sex matters than those of the past. Life in schools, general reading and the cinema have contributed to the acquisition of this knowledge. Their absence from home makes possible sex indulgence as well. The urban child realises his potentialities on reaching maturity but the village youth remains ignorant even after marriage. The physiological processes relating to sex are known by the former and not by the latter.

The boys and girls feel keenly the sexual urge but are actually unable to explain how or why it arises nor do they know of the ways of satisfying this. Hence experiments have to be resorted to. Either life in the boarding school teaches them or they find for themselves avenues. This period is also one of outward expression. Sexual thoughts find expression even though secretly by drawing on walls the figures of sexual organs. These are imaginary pictures and correspond very rarely to the anatomical details nevertheless such drawings will be very useful in interpreting the inhibited sex-emotions of the young people. Sometimes an inscription tells you the actual thought that arose in the mind. When so much has been and can be expressed even under strictly inhibited conditions how much of an active force sex is in the life of an individual can only be imagined.

These inhibited sex emotions remain in the sub-conscious until a moment appears for manifestation and these have free play in dreams.[1] They attain fulfilment to the complete satisfaction of the individual. Things happen as of reality. The intensity of the ecstasy is little minimised. But, on waking disappointment is felt and this itself urges a pursuit of the real thing in life.

Woman is on occasions taboo and all her supposed evil presence is the result of her physiological condition due to her sex. The moment her first menstruation occurs woman is to be avoided as far as possible. This is an occasion of customary practices and the elders attempt to impress on her the significance of her changed status. Because man fears blood the presence of blood in an object makes it dreaded in society. She is on such occasions considered unlucky and must be avoided as unclean and defiled. From now onwards she is to avoid company of men. In the case of boys the attainment of puberty is an insignificant event which is passed over even unnoticed.

After puberty young men and women are considered dangerous elements to be left alone together.[2] This is also due to the fact that woman's sex has been appreciated and viewed with fear. Not only do they know more but they also feel more and think more. In sex matters the woman is less easily roused but more easily convinced. She is less adventurous. But the man is easily roused to passion and acts quicker though liable to change his mind. He is also freer in that the woman will be guilty of blame. Sinhalese society provides no occasion or has any social events supplying sexual satisfaction to its members. Men and women are not allowed free association. The laws and customs

1. According to sinhalese beliefs a female called *Mohini* appears in dreams to seduce young men. In the case of females this manifestation is called *Kalukumaraya*,
2. Parents take good care to see that no opportunities are given to their sons and daughters.

are extremely strict about virginity. No degree of obstruction will stop the sex urge. Men and women have given expression to this urge whenever the least opportunity prevailed. Feasts and processions, temples and wells provided more opportunities than anything else in Ceylon. These acted as dance halls, parks and cafes of Europe. But the village well takes the highest marks for romance.

As a matter of fact the ignorance of physiological function in paternity is colossal with peasant folk. It seems that sex has nothing to do with these processes, but it must not be forgotten that the sex urge dominates such functions. Menstruation, copulation, conception and birth are problems which are beyond control and best left to take their own course. Eugenics is beyond reach. Contraceptive methods are unknown, unheard and remain unused. There have been and are cases where growing love and close association in certain instances lead to the final act in the nearby woods.

Such cases of premarital sexual enjoyment are rare and do not exist as an institution recognised or connived at. Neither any system of substituted convenience as a dance or drama prevails. Dancing and drama are only for males. The women have their own pastimes but in no one of these do they freely and openly sport together with men in an association recognised by society. And hence the pre-marital period drags on as one of the most trying for girls, and difficult and restless for men. In this critical stage of life when thoughts of sex predominate our rural society provides no suitable outlet for burning emotion. It consumes the person by burning within. The village men and women suffer less through repression than the urban population. The Sinhalese girls who leave school or college in all their youthful beauty, freshness, vigour and hope, on returning home where sex life finds least expression gradually lose their maiden charm, buxom body and sweet demeanour. Repression saps the freshness and pining induces a permanent melancholy. If they marry in time normal life is restored, but if they don't they crack up and despair. The truth of this sad state of girls is obvious to anyone who would compare the school girls in their final year with their condition after a few years of staying at home.

Some are forced to a life of adventure and illicit enjoyment. Some men find sexual satisfaction by extending their sweet patronage to the system of prostitution which unfortunately in this country promotes destitution amongst the poor village girls who are lured to towns by the promise of attractive jobs. The pity of it is that the pleasure is not mutual. It is only a paid service in which the girls are forced to

continue either for want or fear in captivity. Many other forms of sexual gratification and perversion are prevalent both in the urban and rural areas.

The human body male or female is neither worshipped nor admired for its beauty. The influence of Buddhism may have in a large measure contributed to an attitude of disinterestedness towards beauty of form and body although life itself was held in great sanctity. Sexual life may have been greatly controlled of its natural civilised expression in decent society by the spirit of religion.[1] The human body is material and liable to disintegration like everything else. What need is there for beautifying such a body. Hence there was no beauty culture. High sense of decorum and ideas of feminine behaviour desired to hide the limbs of woman as much as possible. But even these feelings relaxed in poverty.

The beauty of the human form although not explicitly expressed finds ample subconscious appreciation as is evidenced by the mutual human dispositions. Beautiful females are admired not through love of beauty but through excitement of sex emotions. There is definitely sexual attraction and selection. Whatever one might say about colour the Sinhalese are colour-conscious in so far as a distinct admiration and preference prevails for a fair colour not only in selection of a partner but also in the excitement of sexual passion. Whilst the various shades of brown are less attractive than white black is altogether out of favour. This is definitely a sexual complex and should not be confused with a racial prejudice similar to a colour bar since in all social matters colour consciousness does not enter the mind of the Sinhalese.

The ideas regarding beauty change according to the ideals. These are a racial characteristic resulting from long tradition. Environment and custom may play a part but not indeed a dominant part. There may be a classical ideal which need not necessarily be the popular one. Nevertheless every people of each generation has a mentally fixed standard of beauty for the male and female form. According to such a conception a man is considered handsome if he is tall, well set and proportionate in limb, fair complexioned, with dark hair, straight nose and manly, is neither bestial nor too effeminate.

A woman should be small made, fair, with delicate soft limbs, effeminate features, round face, thin lips, small nose, blue eyes, small evenly placed pearl like teeth, dark, long and flowing hair.

1. *Raga* as leading to evil, is considered an evil to be suppressed.

According to the natural law of selection it should be possible to develop these points in the race. But the majority of marriages are not the result of free individual selection in Sinhalese society. If at all, these points are seldom considered, social conventions being the dominant factors. Caste, social status, profession, wealth and dowry are the essential factors of a union. Education and the girl remain quite unimportant. Love marriages are rare. The arranged marriages are the order of the day still. As such it is doubtful whether the partners of a marriage derive the fullest satisfaction, mental and physical. This is a matter of serious doubt more so if it is remembered that the Sinhalese marry young and are not at all educated in sex matters. The subject of sex is taboo. Having little knowledge of sex the couple find themselves together in a strange relationship. Their feelings remain mixed with fear and happiness. The girl is frightened and goes through the night like a victim of sacrifice. And the man none the wiser resorts to brute force. The pain and fear lead to a nervous state in which love and innate bashfulness are at conflict. The first night is remembered by the majority who remain virgins up to that night. This fact has to be proved by showing the blood-stained sheet of the bridal bed to the mother of the bridegroom. After the excitement of the first night mating becomes a matter of course and annually an addition to the family arrives. The posture of mating is the natural one, anything novel or out of the ordinary positions being regarded as indecent and vulgar.

The vital part played by the husband in the procreation of children is known and appreciated but the ignorance or shyness about paternity is betrayed in some of the folk songs[1] of the Sinhalese. However, actual cases of ignorance of paternity are possible when more than one man has access to one woman. In society where polyandry prevails the children are conveniently considered to belong to one person. In Ceylon the eldest brother becomes the father of the children. The modern scientific methods of limiting families to one's requirements are neither known nor practised by the Sinhalese peasants although the educated resort to these. In the past there have been recorded cases of infanticide. What the reasons are one cannot say. A child of an illegal union is got rid of by inducing abortion. Old women are employed and these use certain herbs and yams for obtaining the desired effect. Miscarriages are common and these are attributed to

1. Wijesekera, N. D.—*The Buddhist*, July 1942 continued.
Sinhalese women are referred to by Ellis as covering their genitalia for fear that devils might have intercourse with them.

carelessness or undesirable foods. On the other hand the explanation may be found in their weak state of health.

The husband approaches the wife on any night except during her periods of menstruation. In the matter of sexual gratification the wife is dependent entirely on the will and pleasure of the husband. The obvious result is large families. This practice is condemned by some folk who say that such behaviour resembles that of cattle and not human beings. However, male babies are preferred to females. Barrenness also prevails. The common belief is that the woman is barren. The barren woman is considered very unlucky and inauspicious. She is avoided as much as possible specially on occasions requiring luck. This society believes that this may be the result of her *karma* or the evil effect of magic. Therefore it is also possible to cure barrenness by magic and medicine.

IX

EDUCATION

THERE IS no system of education either national or European. What is undertaken today is a piecemeal distribution of Western and Eastern knowledge through a foreign medium in ways least adapted to the culture of the Sinhalese. Very few are even aware of the aim of education. And the majority have no benefit from it as it least affects them. The ancient system of pirivena teaching[1] has disappeared, slight traces being found in the circles of Bhikkhus. No substitute for this age-old system has been set up in its stead except a few village schools that attempt to teach up to a point. The Western type of education as introduced here was primarily for training clerical assistants for the efficient working of a foreign government as it was found impossible for the rulers to take up such low positions without loss of prestige and expense. Further, it was difficult to import such a large crowd of Europeans. Need we then wonder at the absence of a proper system, the throttling of the ancient system and the very high percentage of illiteracy. At the present day there are the following educational institutions in the country :—

(1) Pirivenas
(2) Sinhalese and Tamil schools
(3) Bilingual schools
(4) Training schools for Sinhalese, Tamil and English Teachers
(5) English schools.

There are the secondary schools so-called Colleges (Vidyalayas) and the Technical Schools, Tutories and the University.

Whatever the functions of a Pirivena were according to the ancient system today it is merely an institution which professes to teach young Bhikkhus. Lay pupils are not precluded from gaining admission. So there sprang up attached to every temple in the village such an idea and a few Bhikkhus and young men read their books. It was merely a small class in most instances. What was taught were languages, Pali, Sanskrit, and Sinhalese. At times the resident teacher

1. De Silva, W. A.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXVI—1918.

acted as tutor to the children of well-to-do village parents. This teaching had a religious bias. In a Pirivena a child received a cultural instruction in an environment of Buddhist monks. The peasants learnt to read and write and went back to take up the agricultural work of their parents. Others pursued a higher course with a view to take up professions. Those intending to be monks, pundits and physicians (Vedaralas) were in this group. The best known of these Pirivenas are found in Kandy[1] and Colombo.[2]

The Sinhalese and Tamil Schools were started for training missionaries and to facilitate the teaching of Christianity. These were, begun as early as the Dutch times and are being continued. Later schools were also opened up by private individuals, religious bodies and societies. These catered to the needs of peasant children. The schools attempted to teach up to about the 8th Standard. The subjects taught are : Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Mathematics, Geography, History, Drawing. One would notice the absence of a vocational or technical bias and the presence of a religious stress. In none of these schools was there the semblance of a cultural background. A great deal of proselytisation has been going on unchecked until now the inevitable clash between the foreign and the national has come to a head. All children irrespective of religious conscience attended any school but the Buddhist and Hindu religionists outnumbered the others even in Christian Schools. The results were denationalisation, conversion and acculturation with loss to national culture. The missionaries with the help of government pursued a policy of their own until Buddhists and Hindus began to open schools for their own children. Considerable progress has been achieved and this too against heavy odds even from the Buddhist public.

The bilingual schools are mostly state owned and are nothing more than a combination of the English and Vernacular school in one. There are also training schools state-managed and otherwise where special instructions are imparted for training teachers in Sinhalese and Tamil. This is the highest training that this line of teaching professes to impart. And all of them come under the class of Primary Schools.

Within the system of Secondary Schools range a variety of English schools where the medium of instruction is English, the background is European and the subjects taught least useful to this country. The missionaries had the monopoly of these foundations for their own

1. Asgiriya and Malwatte.
2. Vidyalankara Pirivena of Peliyagoda, Kelaniya ; Vidyodaya Pirivena of Maligakande.

political, imperial and religious gains until recently national societies appeared in the field. The standard of efficiency and proficiency are measured by English. From here the next step is University education. There is also a state training college for training English teachers for the secondary schools. There are a number of private tutories set up quite recently to absorb the unsuccessful material willingly sent out from the secondary schools. There is also a Technical College and last but not least the Ceylon University.[1] It is a proper university in the sense that it fulfils in theory all the higher ideals of a University. Actually no attempt has so far been made to give it a national cultural background nor set up courses useful for the development of the genius of the people.

It may be interesting to note that 500 years of foreign domination have produced nothing outstanding in the field of arts or science. Will the next 500 years be as barren ? The Minister of Education and the Cabinet are responsible for the policy of education in the country. The University is autonomous save for an annual subsidy by the State because of which the annual budget of the University has got to be scrutinised and passed by the Parliament.

Under the Ministry is the Department of Education. There are the State schools and grant-in-aid schools. The former are managed entirely by the State whilst the latter are managed by other bodies to whom the State allows an annual grant if their working is up to the requirements of the Department. The Department conducts a few examinations and runs a few establishments. Whether the fault is in the University or the Department for the present state of Ceylon education for which millions of rupees are spent annually remains to be discovered.

1. Affiliated to the University of London, following its syllabuses and taking its degrees until 1941 when the Ceylon University was established. It now grants its own degrees and has a number of Faculties.

X

FOOD, DRESS, ORNAMENTS AND HABITS

BEFORE THE introduction of the clock by the Europeans the Sinhalese reckoned time by the position of the sun in the sky. Thus there were three main points of reference viz: sunrise, sun-overhead, and sunset. One's shadow is measured in human steps and this is recorded as so many feet in the fore-noon or afternoon. Such a reckoning could satisfy only a popular need. More precise measurement of time[1] was reckoned by a water-clock and these were required by astrologers, astronomers and other officials.

The principal meals[2] of the people were fixed for the three positions of the sun. These were supplemented by intermediate eats and drinks of a lighter nature. The middle and upper classes take a mixed diet of European and Sinhalese dishes, little care being paid to the nutritive value of the food. Generally speaking, Portuguese and Dutch culinary arts have influenced the diet of these classes. But it is the fashion to eat European dishes. The average diet of the peasant is not such an elaborate preparation in which due care has been paid for the required vitamin contents. In Ceylon one may almost be certain of the class of a person by the food he eats. The nutritive value and richness of the food depend on the wealth of the family.

Rice forms the staple food of the Sinhalese. A morning meal of rice is partaken at about 7 a.m. the rice being fresh or a portion left over from the previous night. A *sambol*[3] or *pol-hodi*[4] is made afresh. Yams such as manioc, sweet potatoes or taro are boiled and eaten with scraped coconut. Some prepare *hoppers*[5] or *pittu*[6] at home. Others buy something, a bun or bread, from a boutique. Tea is commonly drunk,

1. Alvis, Rev. C.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. III, No. 10.
2. There are some who can afford only two or one or scarcely a square meal a day.
3. The *sambol* is a hot dish made by grinding together, chillies, onions, salt, Maldive-fish and scraped coconut. A little lemon juice is also added. Some prefer without the coconut whilst others have the ingredients like fresh chillies and onions together with salt and lemon juice.
4. *Pol-hodi* is a very light soup like dish made with coconut milk cooked with a few condiments. It is light yellow in colour and a special feature of the Southern Province meals.
5. *Appa*, a kind of baked pan cake made of rice flour and coconut milk, probably of Dutch origin.
6. *Pittu* is made by mixing ground-flour and scraped coconut steam.cooked.

coffee being preferred by a few older-folk. Then the people go on their business. At about 10 A.M. a cup of tea, a young coconut or a glass of water is drunk. The mid-day meal consists of rice, a vegetable or two, fish, flesh or dried fish. In quantity it is a very heavy meal. And as such the participants require a good rest after it. A cup of tea is taken in the afternoon and work stops at about five in the evening. Where the tea or coffee is not sugared a lick of sugar or a bite of jaggery keeps company. The last meal for the day is taken soon after sunset. This is again rice and a few curries. Except on special occasions such as a full-moon, mask-dance, or a ceremony the village folk find no form of entertainment for enjoying the leisure hours in the company of their family. The family retire to bed soon after dinner.

A true Sinhalese diet has been found to be an evolution by a method of trial and error. Natural products of one's environment contribute largely to the composition of this diet. Fruits and leaves, fish and flesh are obtained for the day. The rice is stored after the harvest. The fat is derived from the coconut used in cooking the curries. Rice, naturally is the staple food. Unfortunately today, more and more imported polished rice is being consumed in the villages where before local rice sufficed to feed the local population. There are seasonal additions helping to supplement the stocks thereby relieving the mônotony as well. Jak and bread fruit are plentifully eaten during the season. Mangoes, papaws, bananas and oranges are also consumed. The coconuts help in a variety of ways. The kernel is scraped and squeezed with water into a milky liquid for cooking the curries. The scraped coconut is also eaten with the rice. Any flesh, fish, vegetable, yam leaf or flower may be and can be cooked with spices and coconut milk into a curry—chilli is the favourite spice of all and actually people eat this in excessive quantities.

A favourite dish with the Sinhalese is a mixture obtained by grinding chillies, salt, onions and a bit of Maldive fish. This is also an emergency dish considered to be a certain " rice puller." Certainly it has helped to consume more rice both among the rich and poor alike but it has also produced deleterious effects. Cereals such as *kurakkan*, *meneri*, wheat, *amu*, *mun*, are also taken. The dry-zone peasants are the chief consumers of these substitutes for rice. Milk is not popular.

Meat and fish though relished by the majority of people do not fall within easy reach owing to the scarcity of the supply and prohibitive price. All varieties of fish and flesh are consumed. In the dry zone specially where the poorest peasants live the jungle provides a variety

of birds and animals that help to add variety to a stale diet. Beef is commonly eaten as it is conveniently purchased. Lake, tank, river or pool fish are caught and eaten; of course sea-fish is scarce in the interior save in the form of dried fish. Dried or salted fish is greatly relished.

Certain foods are taboo and these could be grouped under two heads, seasonal and permanent. Women are expected not to eat certain foods during certain periods when the body is in a special state of health. This is perfectly natural. Real taboos are the following : Meat and fish should not be taken at the same meal. The flesh of animals and fish whose names end in "ran" are supposed to be taboo on special occasions. Again all foods are divided into two classes the heaty and the cooling. This helps indirectly to maintain a certain balance. For example a peasant mother will not hear of her children eat stale rice, brinjals, curds, drink young coconuts and bathe on the same day since all these are believed to be frightfully cooling. Mixing of certain types of food is also disliked. A general dislike to eat eggs, fish or flesh and drink milk is expressed. This fact should be explained by religious scruples. The majority of the people being Buddhists stock farming is not encouraged. Nevertheless some actually do so although prohibited by Buddhism. Eggs and milk are sold.

Water is the common natural drink of the people. Tea and coffee are drunk in large quantities.[1] The sweet juice of the palmyra, *kitul* and coconut palm are appreciated by some and as a tonic given even to children. Alcoholic beverages[2] are indulged in but the society disapproves of it.

A variety of sweets are made with flour and honey and then cooked in oil. Some of these may be Portuguese or Dutch in origin. Sweets are also baked and steamed. The art of making sweets at home is dying out owing to the ability to buy them freely in the market. Ghee and coconut oil take the place of cooking fats.

Certain customary observances regarding precedence in dining are still in force though not strictly adhered to. Communal meals are enjoyed at feasts when gradations of caste and class are rigorously observed. Men and women seldom eat together. It is usual to feed the children and the men first. The women eat last. A faithful and devoted wife is supposed even to go hungry rather than eat before her husband partakes his meal.

Sinhalese medicines consist chiefly of oils and decoctions, pills and

1. *Bebila, ranawara, irimusu, pala* are also used for medicinal purposes as special beverages.
2. Toddy, arrack, foreign liquors.

gruels internally taken; poultices and pastes externally applied. Plants, roots, nuts and tubers are used in their manufacture which is carried out in accordance with a system of mnemonic formulas serving as prescriptions. Certain vegetables and fruits are also prescribed for their special value to the human system. Practically every plant functions in the service of medical treatment. Popular remedies are also well known amongst the peasant population.

The Sinhalese dress[1] has been evolving in harmony with the social organisation in which the rank and position of the wearer was seen at a glance by the actual dress and mode of wearing. No such sartorial distinctions gain official recognition. But still class opinion is for continuation of such distinctions whilst the popular effort is for gaining uniformity. Some of the outcastes like Rodiyas and Kinnaras are prohibited by the villagers from wearing the normal peasant dress.

The normal Sinhalese dress is simple, inexpensive and inartistic. The economy of clothing is conditioned entirely by the natural environment. Children up to about the age of seven years wear practically nothing when at home but put on a light gown on occasions. Both male and female children up to about the age of ten wear a *kamis.* Then they wear a piece of coloured cloth from the waist down to the knees when at home. When they go out of doors the boys wear an upper garment such as a coat, shirt, baniyan or vest and the girls a blouse or jacket. The young men wear a sarong, a shirt and coat; and the women a camboy and a jacket, laying bare an inch or two of the body between the lower and the upper garment. A coat is a luxury. The very respectable older village folk still tie their hair into a knot and adorn the head with a crescent shaped shellcomb affixed to the hair. It is difficult to define a typical Sinhalese dress. There is no such uniformity. Efforts are being made to evolve a typical common dress. Each class of society has a dress characteristic of that class. An apparent difference between the up-country and low-country forms of dress also prevails. This may be due to the conservatism of the up-country folk who have been little affected by foreign modes. Trousers are becoming very popular with the educated male classes whilst the females wear the saree. Nevertheless, on special occasions special uniforms are expected to be worn by those who are entitled to them on

1. The use of bark cloth by the Sinhalese is never mentioned in legend or history although the jungle tribes are said to have used them and even the Veddas used them until recently. Bark is used for making bags by the Veddas. The bark of the riti tree is used for making bags and mats

account of their rank. The up-country chiefs also have an old form of dress.

The girls of the English educated classes wear short frocks and European underwear when attending school but on leaving school change into the saree and blouse. The boys wear shorts and shirt. All these classes wear shoes. The rest of the population try to ape these in certain points or completely.

A classic example of culture contact where the different layers are still present stratified in one is the erstwhile popular dress of the Mudaliyar. This is a combination of Sinhalese, European and Malay. There is the span cloth as underwear. Next comes the pair of trousers,socks and shoes. Over the trousers is worn a tweed cloth or white cloth. A vest, shirt, tie and collar and coat form the upper dress. The hair is tied into a knot, and a shellcomb is affixed. A topie is worn on the head. How funny it looks the wearer little realises ; but it is the height of ridicule and a relic of many cultures. The Arachchis, Muhandirams and Mudaliyars, the Korales, Dissaves and Ratemahatmayas each in turn has a special dress for the office and it has to be worn during ceremonial occasions.

When engaged in labour of any description the Sinhalese males work almost bare-bodied save for a span-cloth which is worn on a belt tied around the waist. A part of the cloth hangs frontally whilst the other end is passed between the legs and tucked on to the waist line behind. It is an uncouth and undignified dress which barely hides one's nudity. The men of South Ceylon are averse to this form of dress for work. They tuck up the sarong or cloth[1] as it is worn by them. The women usually work in cloth and blouse. Sometimes, in the villages the women use a large handkerchief as the upper garment. One end is tied round the neck and the other is tucked inside the cloth at the hips. Ample freedom of movement of the upper part of the body is thereby obtained. The women of outcastes wear this form of upper dress. The men bathe in their work dress whilst the women wear a one-piece cloth from the breast up to the knee.[2] It is a very cumbersome costume restricting freedom of movement and security of suspension. The inconvenience of this dress is not felt too much since women seldom indulge in active sports.

The Sinhalese males wear no ornaments save a ring or two. Articles of wear with a magical significance should not be mistaken for

1. Compare this with the men's normal dress in the South Sea Islands.
Compare this with the dress of the South Sea Islanis.

ornaments. Decoration of the body is the age old privilege of the female sex and the Sinhalese women form no exception. The children from their infancy wear a waist chain and a necklace or bangle on the arms or legs. A special protective ornament is the *pancayudha* a chain and a pendant on which are carved or imprinted the following five symbols :—Sword, Conch, Bow, Disc, Arrow.

The young girls are extremely fond of decorating the body with natural and artificial objects. Flowers and garlands, jewellery of various descriptions are used in beautifying the female body. The verage set of jewellery consists of a hair-pin, earrings, necklace, bangles and rings. The jewellery of the up-country and low-country women shows a difference in so far as the former is older and more national whilst the latter are more modern. Silver and gold are the most popular metals. Pearls and gems are set on most of the articles of jewellery. Anklets are worn by the up-country girls. The Sinhalese girls pierce the ears but not the nose. The desire of all parents is to provide their daughters with as much jewellery as possible so that it forms a safe investment that can be also considered as a dowry. Jewellery is handed down in families in female succession and a sentimental attachment grows up in relation to such articles. A woman could much rather starve or suffer than part with a piece of family jewellery. Personal beauty is not pursued with the same fervour as in the West but simple charm is sought after. Bright colours are much appreciated.

The men and women who tie their hair in a knot do so in exactly the same fashion except that in the case of women a hair-pin is driven into the knot both to serve as an ornament and to keep the extra-braid of hair knotted together with a view to increasing the bulk. Dark wavy long hair is considered a sign of beauty. Coconut oil is applied to facilitate combing and to add to the shine. Nails are not painted, the cheeks are not rouged and lips not tinted by the peasant women. These are at times practised even by Sinhalese women. Powder is freely used in surplus quantities.

The filing of teeth is another attempt at improving the looks and adorning the face. A special kind of stone is used for filing the teeth to a smaller size and at the same time even down the angularities. The operation is painful but could be borne. A woman acts as the operator. Sometimes men also get their teeth filed.

On the other hand the men tatoo their bodies. This is a recent practice copied from foreigners. The chest and arms are tatooed with many a beautiful symbol or pattern. The chief colours used are red and black.

Women refrain from any such practices.

The wearing of a wristlet and spectacles is considered a matter of show however great their need may be.

Bathing is one of the oldest human habits practised with varying degrees of importance and regularity in different parts of the world. In India a special religious significance was attached to baths and water baptism. Whether the necessity of climate or ancient habit or both compelled regular bathing amongst the Sinhalese it may not be possible to say. However, the Sinhalese[1] are fond of bathing and do so regularly.

As a water sport or ritual bathing is not indulged in; but as a means of removing the body odour, dirt and fatigue and heat people resort to bathing. Early morning is preferred to any other time of the day although evening has become now the most convenient when the day's work ends. The well, a pool, a tank, a stream, spout or river are the favourite bathing spots. The sea fascinates a few. Bathing is a common sight in Ceylon. Most of the bathing is indulged in at the village well, the water being drawn up by means of a pot, bucket or vessel tied to a rope and emptied over the head. A certain number of vessels-full is fixed as the sufficient amount which should not be exceeded or diminished by the individual for fear of coming in for a cold. When bathing in streams some persons stand up shoulder deep in water and then keep diving in and out of the water in rhythmic order. The boys indulge in swimming and water sports.

Certain herbs, pastes and compounds are used for rubbing the body and washing the hair. It is believed that some of these ingredients improve the skin-colour and infuse a fragrance. Of these sandal-wood paste and *kokum*-bark cool the body and enhance the beauty. Boiled lemon and or *nelli* cleanses the head and promotes the growth of hair. During disorders of the body baths are refrained from, but Fridays and Tuesdays are generally avoided as being unlucky. A ceremonial atmosphere prevails during a purificatory bath prior to an important economic, social, or religious event like building a tank, starting ploughing, marriage, bali dance, ordination. Water is supposed to remove the human pollutions resulting from " kili." Charmed water is supposed to cure the evil effects of the evil eye and mouth whilst *pirit* water affords protection as well. Both act as prophylactics.

Apart from baths and bathing the Sinhalese wash themselves more than once a day. The mouth and face are washed after waking and

1. As opposed to the Veddas who conveniently avoid bathing.

before retiring to bed. The mouth[1] is also washed before partaking of a meal or after contact with "kili." This is purely a means of removing dust or betel-stains, or pollutions. Water is also used to cleanse oneself after excretion, the left hand being used in this operation. Some apply water after using toilet paper. But all use water.

Coconut oil is applied on the head both for keeping the scalp moist and hair glossy. Medicinal oils are sometimes used to prevent headaches or neuralgic complaints. Hair creams, tonics and vaselines are applied by the others. The women grow the hair and even some men do so but now the men and boys cut the hair short. The beard is shaved. Whilst some grow a moustache others shave that too.

An age old habit of the Sinhalese is the chewing of betel and later tobacco. This is indulged in to such an extent that a black coating is left on the teeth. Some chew only tobacco. Others add tobacco as well to the betel-chew. The habit of chewing appears almost to be a national characteristic. The writer thinks it has become a pre-occupation that acts as a gentle stimulant even as a cigarette. The chief addicts are old men and women and Bhikkhus.

The ingredients of a chew of betel are arecanuts, fresh or dried, betel leaves and lime tinted with turmeric or plain. Other ingredients are also added to flavour and strengthen the mixture. These are tobaçco, cardamons, cloves, spices, copra, *vemmal* etc. The mixture is chewed into a fine paste by spitting out red-saliva that exudes in the process. In the remote parts of the country when the three primary ingredients are not obtainable substitutes such as bark of trees (*kahata*), leaves of plants and areca roots and lime are partaken. The trail of the betel-chewer is left on everything he or she passes such as walls of buildings, pillars, posts, vehicles, by rubbing the lime left over from a chew. The king and peasant chewed betel and a betel culture grew to be an elaborate complex[2] made up of a number of vessels and processes.

Tobacco was introduced by the Dutch from whom the Sinhalese learnt to chew and smoke it. Prior to this other varieties of dried leaves[3] were being smoked. These are still being smoked by some in remote villages. The use of tobacco for smoking and chewing has spread throughout the Island in one form or another, viz., the pipe, cigar and cigarette. The tobacco plant grows well in Ceylon. Practi-

1. Washing the mouth has become such a regular feature that it has become a prelude to eating and dinner is announced by simply offering a vessel of water.

2. Betel bag, betel box, betel tray, lime container, arecanut cutter, spittoon, mixing mortar, etc. For origin of betel *see* Ola Ms. No. 7, G. 6, Colombo Museum.

3. *Nika, agal adhara.*

cally the whole output is used in making cigars or chewing with or without betel. Cigarette tobacco is also being grown now. Cigars are very popular at least not for its smell but for its smoke and price. Pipe smoking is also in vogue but the fashionable smoke is the cigarette.

Alcoholic beverages[1] are obtained by fermenting the juice extracted from the flower of the kitul, coconut, or palmyra palm. This is known as toddy which when distilled produces a spirituous liquor called arrack. The Government has the monopoly of distilling arrack but the local process of distilling arrack is resorted to although it is considered illegal. This stuff, also called pot arrack, specially when seasoned possesses medicinal value. Many varieties of foreign liquor are imported and consumed, the most popular being beer, gin, whisky and champaigne. Foreign liquor can be obtained from any resthouse or hotel and could be stocked in any quantity. Strangely enough arrack is not permitted to be sold except in special places called taverns but the strangest thing is that one is allowed to possess only two bottles while any amount of foreign liquor could be stocked.

Narcotics cannot be left out of the picture since some of the Sinhalese are addicted to them. Opium was sold freely but its import has been stopped and the commodity is smuggled from India and a big underworld trade is carried on. Opium is taken both by men and women who find in the drug a temporary remedy against mental and physical pain. *Ganja, legiyam, hash-is* and other varieties of narcotics are also used by men. The leaves are rolled into a cigarette or cigar and then smoked. The Excise Department is making frantic efforts to stop illicit trafficking in these articles but so far without visible success. On the other hand the trade is prospering underground.

1. It is surprising that the art of making rice beer is not known to the Sinhalese.

XI

DOMESTIC UTENSILS

THE SINHALESE use a few natural shells converted into vessels. The coconut and the gourd shells are amongst them and these are put to a variety of uses. The coconut shell spoons serve a variety of functions specially in the kitchens of both rich and poor alike. Beautiful carved ladles and cups with wooden handles are also made out of these shells. The so called male-shell[1] is pierced in two places and a short piece of the arecanut palmwood is driven through so as not to leave any opening for liquids to percolate. Other objects of an artistic nature are also made out of the coconut shell.

The use of gourd shells is not at all common but the shell of the ash-pumpkin is used for collecting toddy from the palm-tree. It is done by the man remaining on the crown of the tree and then lowering the vessel by means of a string attached to it. Other vessels made out of shells are still used as measures and storage vessels by the village folk. The Veddas also use them.

Baskets are made of reeds or canes in a variety of shapes and ways. Sometimes a paste[2] is applied to prevent grains and rice falling through. Baskets made of reed present a coarseness that is lacking in those of cane. The former is employed in coarse out door work whilst the latter is used in domestic work. Fishing, farming, horticulture and agriculture all require baskets. In the kitchen a conical shaped reed vessel is used for straining and another horse shoe shaped vessel for winnowing. Storage vessels both in the home and outside it are made of reed. Large bins for storing grains in barns are also made of reed. Out of a numerous variety of other reed vessels may be mentioned certain grain measures.

Odd pieces of modern furniture find a place practically in every home however poor it may be. The dirt of ages rests on these but the inmates do not seem to worry. Among these may be mentioned beds, tables, chairs, almirahs, and boxes. Empty tar and cement barrels

1. The one with the three eyes is called the female shell and is not used.
2. The composition of this is cowdung and earth, very ripe beli or divul.

cut into two serve to store water or grow flower plants. Quite a number of wooden objects used in the kitchen may be survivals of older types or substitutes. The coconut scrapers, mortars, measures, and cups belong to this class. The mortars are carved out of wood and mostly used for grinding grains and rice.

The mortar made of wood or stone shows unmistakeable proof of antiquity. The modern object has had an evolution which is interesting to study. The stone[1] and wooden articles are found side by side in the kitchen even today. Stones for grinding grains specially kurakkan are shaped into so called querns. Stone is also used for vessels to hold water. Flat rectangular slabs on which spices and chillies are ground with a stone hand roller must find special mention. Every kitchen possesses a mortar and a grinding stone.

A time was when copper and brass vessels and objects had a place practically in every home. Every object of daily use was made of brass and was used up to very recent times when imported glass and alluminium ware superseded them. Lamps, plates, *chembus*, boxes and all manner of articles displayed in the shops were fashioned by craftsmen for daily use. Today it is neither the fashion to use metal objects nor is it economical to do so. The functional use of these have been transformed into an aesthetic purpose of beautifying the home. Many of these objects have become curios. Vessels have been made of silver specially for the use of the rich but the art of metal working is fast disappearing.

Little that could be called Sinhalese is found in use in Ceylon. Foreign markets have introduced new fashions along with new utensils. Heavy competition has driven out the local made objects and Japan has overrun the market even driving out the articles of European origin and design. Homes even in the remotest corners of the dry-zone will proudly display a China cup, glass tumbler and alluminium vessel or some such object. The one object that every one possesses and has actually become a household article is the electric torch which even the Veddas possess.

Sinhalese weights and measures[2] seldom come into daily use during the normal life of the people. The weight of medicine is reckoned in *kalan*, precious metals in *pagodi* and precious stones in *mancadi*. grains are measured and now even weighed. (*seruwa*) a measure is used for grains and liquids.

1. Neville, H.—*Taprobanian*, Vol. 1—Stone vessels.
2. Modder, F.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 12, No. 43—1892.

The hearth is placed either in a part of the house, or outside the house. Meals are cooked in the kitchen so as not to be seen by the outsiders who might cast a greedy look. Clay vessels are used for cooking. Three stones of gneiss, cabook or brick form a hearth. Wood is used for the fire.

The simple life of the Sinhalese peasant demanded only a few mechanical aids to obtain from the natural environment the essential requirements of his life. Economic activity was a local matter involving exchange, barter and borrowing and was so simple in its make up as scarcely to merit the term trade. The products limited themselves automatically to the demand. The self-sufficiency of the village was well-known The arts and crafts were manual, independent of mechanical aids. Seldom was there a surplus and in such a case these were sold at the annual fairs.

Oil presses, looms, pumps, the wheel and the plough are among the chief mechanical instruments aiding production. The plough[1] was the common means of facilitating agriculture and was known from very ancient times. Though not popular with every farmer the majority of people carrying on intensive cultivation resorted to the plough as a labour-saving devise whereby at the same time buffaloes and bulls could be employed to assist.

The looms are of a very primitive type where the operator has to sit on the floor or in a pit. A very simple loom is found among the Kinnaras who still weave some of the beautiful reed mats known as Dumbara mats. The other, a little more elaborate loom is employed as an aid to cottage weaving.

Few mechanical aids operate in the process of rope-making which as an industry is carried out by a special section of the population living along the maritime belt of land. They are the Halagama community.

The bow and arrow as used today are primarily weapons of the chase used by the Veddas. The Sinhalese do not use them save in childhood as a toy. Even with the Veddas these instruments have assumed a symbolical presence and have lost all practical bearing. Only one type appears to have been in use among the Sinhalese and that the plain one. There was a pellet bow as well.

The stone sling is still in use amongst the villagers. The throwing

1. Lewis, J. P.—*J.R.A.S.*, No. 29—1884. Contains an account of the Sinhalese plough which closely resembles the Indian plough.

stick and the blow pipe seem to have been known by the Sinhalese as traces of them can be recovered from certain areas even today.

The gun is responsible for the disappearance of Sinhalese instruments of the war and chase. Fire-arms were known to the people from the time of the arrival of Portuguese and the popularity may be assumed when it may be known that even the Veddas boast of a few guns.

Air pumps used by the Sinahlese of the medaeval period have disappeared in all parts of the Island. The bellows made of skin are being employed in their place. These are found in smithies where large objects are made of iron, copper or brass. There are two varieties one worked by foot and the other by hand. The gold and silver smiths use a short reed to blow on the fire.

Another mechanical devise may be worth mentioning as it is frequently resorted to in drawing water from deep wells. This is the water plank worked on the principle of the balance. The pole is centrally pivoted on a vertical post. A weight is tied on one end and the vessel is hung to the other by a rope. This may be worked by other means, one of which is popularly called walking the plank in Jaffna District.

Among the variety of ways of obtaining oil the Sinhalese use the pressure principle in the extraction.

Two planks are pressed together with the material bearing oil placed between. Gradually the pressure is increased until no more oil is given out. Nuts and large seeds could be crushed by this process.

The special machine for extracting the oil from coconut is called the chekku. A stone or wooden mortar is planted very firmly on the ground allowing a short neck at the bottom to appear above ground. A pestle of wood is placed in the mortar. A pair of bulls or a man carries the yoke around the mortar and the mortar is mechanically worked by being attached to the horizontal yoke which in turn goes around the neck of the chekku. The oil is squeezed out through the opening at the bottom of the chekku on a side. When all the oil is squeezed a refill is introduced after removing the oil cakes (poonac) which serve as animal food. This process enables a large quantity of oil to be squeezed out quickly giving at the same time a marketable byproduct. But the villagers prefer hand made coconut oil.

From very ancient times the wheel was known to the Sinhalese and they also have put it to a number of uses. Even today the village

employs it in transport for carts, in pottery making for the moving wheel, and in carpentry and lapidary for the lathe. The principle of the wheel was not only a labour saving device but it also helped to expedite the work and at the same time aided beauty and symmetry of form in the final product.

XII

AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURE STILL continues to form the main source of food supply of the Sinhalese. Rice is the chief grain cultivated. Owing to the lack of proper irrigation and improved machinery agriculture seldom turns out to be a profitable occupation. As a matter of fact one is hardly able to get any useful return from one's land even after cultivating them with grains. The age-old methods are followed throughout the Island. Intensive agriculture is nowhere found. The poor peasant who has neither extensive acres, huge capital nor proper education cannot be expected to intensify cultivation when those who are fortunate enough to undertake such economic tasks pay no heed at all. Another reason for the apathy towards the industry is the importation of cheap rice from India and Burma. Despite progressive impoverishment the cultivator preserves his respectability[1] as from old.

During many years of European domination many economic fields have benefitted even as suppliers of raw-materials but such a fortune never fell to the lot of the rice-grower who in certain parts, degenerated into a mere nobody encircled all around by huge estates of rubber and tea owned by rich land-owners. Their lands and fields sometimes were bought up by the adjoining large estate-owners reducing the former land owning peasants to landless farmers dependent on the mercy of those who possessed the land.

The present system of cultivation and the position it occupies in the economic field bring little credit to the Department of Agriculture which has continued to function for very many years. The peasants have not benefitted either in the application of scientific knowledge or in the use of modern machinery. In recent years the policy of the Department of Agriculture has been favourable to the farmer in that an attempt is being made to actually help him. If this outlook continues without cessation the land will once more grow enough rice at

1. Cultivator is considered the highest caste in the land today and this is called Goviwansava. But the order as stated in literature is Bamunu, Keth, Govi, Welanda. Knox refers to the cultivator.



least for home consumption. It is only now that scientific officers are pooling their knowledge in co-operation with the farmers in evolving out of the traditional tested method a new and more effective way of cultivation suited to the genius of the Sinhalese peasant. The results will have to wait many more years of preliminary Island-wide work. However, rice growing is the chief cultivation and there are three main ways of growing rice. These are wet-cultivation, terrace cultivation and the chena cultivation. Horticulture supplements the chief food supply and would be treated separately.

When it has been decided to cultivate a fallow field (*asveddumise*) or resume work for a fresh crop an auspicious day and a lucky moment are fixed upon. The neighbours who would work in exchange for similar work (*attam*) are invited. In the early hours of the morning the farmers appease the spirits of the dead and divine. The agricultural are then taken down to the field. These are worshipped. The work is initiated by turning a few sods. Then the farmers return home.

Meanwhile, a pot of rice (*wedakam bath heliya*) is cooked by the mother or the wife of the cultivator of the field. The pot is kept unopened for the son or husband to open. If a lot of holes can be observed on the surface of the rice it is a good omen indicating plenty of rain. The farmer is almost entirely dependent on natural rain for irrigating his fields and the unknown forces that bring harm should be guarded against by propitiation and magic charms. Human and other pollutions should be avoided lest failure is doomed from the very beginning. Hence the farmer has to observe almost at every stage of his work set rituals, ancient customs and traditional beliefs.[1]

All of them then partake of this rice with other foods. Later coconut trees are marked out by a young frond as being set apart for certain gods namely, Vishnu, Kataragama and the *Seven Mothers* with a view to using the nuts and milk and oil in preparing foods for the ritual connected with them. The vows are to be fulfilled after the completion of the harvest by making the offering of food to the respective Devales of the deities. In the alms-giving to the *Seven Mothers*[2] two young girls may also be included to form the seven. Finally offerings of food are given to *Kuda-yaka.*[3] Whatever grain is left over and above the requirements of the vows is kept apart for *Kuda-Bandare*

1. Bell, H. C. P.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 8—1883.
   Ievers, R. W.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 6, page 46—1880.
2. *Kiri Ammage Dane*—a rite relating to fertility.
3. He is supposed to be in charge of cattle and the people appeal to him for protection and even when cattle have strayed he is supposed to be able to find them.

and Kuda-yaka. These ceremonies are followed by a communal meal.

The commencement of serious work depends on the rains. Rain is eagerly awaited and when they come in time great relief is expressed. When sufficient rains have fallen regular work of preparing the soil is begun. The cultivators begin their work by worshipping the implements.

Lands are owned according to an established system of tenure[1] handed down from ancient times. This system is fast disappearing and for the most part what prevails is the modern system of tenure under the Roman Dutch Law.

Agriculture has no mystery connected with it. A great deal has been learnt by trial and error. But still certain taboos have to be observed, certain unknown forces have to be placated, certain pests avoided and certain good influences set in motion for making the job a success. It is essential that such things should be done as the majority of cultivators firmly believe in them. Vows are made to the respective protective Devales, offerings are made to the deities and lights are kept burning. One of these acts is the (*mal bulath pideema*) offering[2] of flowers, betel and light. Women are not encouraged to work in the paddy fields. They may however bring food, drinks and betel to the workers and engage in weeding, transplanting and harvesting. Menstruating women were taboo in ancient times but now this rule has been relaxed. Their presence would decidedly bring about danger and loss.[3] During drought the rain gods are propitiated by processions, vows and pirit chanting. Attempts are made to destroy pests by charms.[4] Birds and beasts are caught by traps or destroyed by shooting. Scare-crows are set up to keep away the evil eye and also birds.

There are two seaons called Yala and Maha. The former is from September to March, the latter from March to September. In some parts both seasons are worked whilst in others none is attempted.

The whole field is split up into linear sections liyaddas with a few small passages for water.

Water received into a field from the rain, river or an irrigation channel

1. De Lanerolle, J. D.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 91—1938, p. 199.
   Reimers, E.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 31, No. 81, p. 17—Feudalism in Ceylon.
   Codrington, H. W.—*Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon* 1938.

2. In a corner of the field is set up a raised stand which is decorated with a roof made of young coconut fronds, flowers and leaves. Inside are placed betel and flowers by day and an oil lamp is lit at night. This is done for a week, or a month.

3. There is a story which is current in Warakagoda Pasdun Korale that in a certain cave the men found all the required weapons made of gold. Due to the presence, one day, of a menstruating woman the gods withdrew them for ever. Similar stories are current in other parts of the Island.

4. "*Ken.*" Coomarasamy, A.—*J.R.A.S.*. Vol. 18—1905.

is conserved by a system of temporary narrow dams arranged in such a manner as to enable the water to circulate freely. After a week or so when the mud is well soaked tilling commences in earnest and the seed must be sown before a certain period. Men work in the fields. The buffalo is employed in ploughing. Definite expressions mark the different stages of the work. The general term used is turning the mud.[1] The first is the *puran keteema.* Then there is the *demeha keteema.* The third is the *wepireema* which includes levelling and sowing the seed. When cattle are employed the field is ploughed once or twice (*wediweema*) and then levelled and sown.

The cultivation of a long neglected and abandoned field once more after a long time is known as *Aswedduma.* The cultivation of a field lain fallow for a few years is known as *puran ketima.* The rough grass and weeds have to be turned out and deposited so as to get all vegetation under. This is difficult labour and is carried out in beautiful long alignments with the help of the mammoty.[2] The next stage of the work commences after a few days. It involves splitting and trampling the sods with the foot and the mammoty. Some skip the second stage but complete the second and third together. The third stage is the process of further splitting up of the mud into smaller particles so as to form a sort of porridge. Finally the mud porridge is levelled by a board drawn with a handle on the surface. Little runnels are cut in certain patterns for the circulation of the water in each liyadda.

When buffaloes are employed to draw the plough men have less work but people do not favour ploughing so much nowadays. But certain fields have to be ploughed when work is started after a period of lapse. One can hear the ploughman singing at his plough specially in the upland areas. The plough songs of the rustic folk resemble the Swiss yodelling in tone, music and rhythm.

After the final levelling by either process of ploughing or mammoty and feet the field has to be sown the same day by one who is proficient in the art of scattering the seeds in a proportionate spread neither more nor less. Every party has such a person. An interesting sight is the scattered groups of almost nude men, their brown bodies completely bathed in mud, with sometimes the heads only showing above the mud, busy with their work whilst the tropical sun reflects on their wet bodies as in a shining bronze mirror.

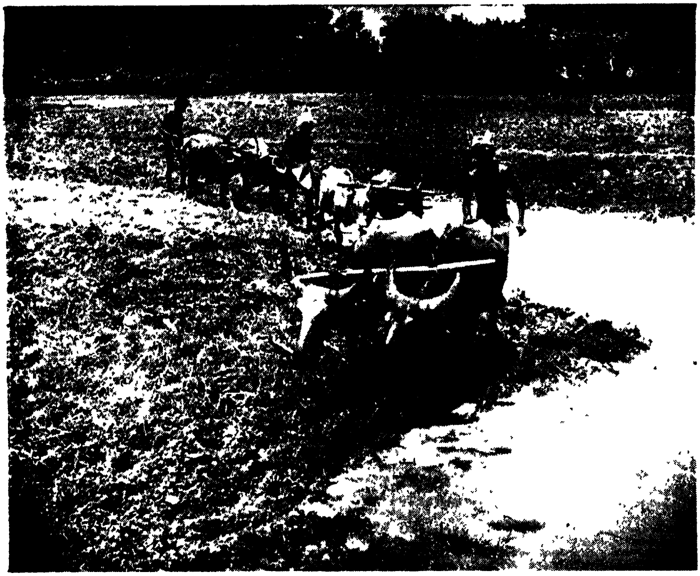
1. *Mada Keteema* means pounding the mud.
2. *Udella* in different shapes is used in different parts of the Island. The locally made ones are different from the imported article.

The variety of seed sown depends on the nature of the field and the time available before the commencement of the next season. Hence seeds are graded as senior[1] and junior.[2] Out of a large number of different species the particular one suitable for the field and time has to be selected. Having decided on the seed the farmer has to prepare it by keeping the seed in a bag under water for a fixed time until sprouting commences. This is mixed with bone meal or any other manure and sown by hand.

After sowing follow a period of comparative rest during which the cultivators seek other economic pursuits. The fields cannot be neglected. Irrigation systems have to be attended to. During the first few weeks the birds become a nuisance and cause destruction by eating the seed and the bone meal. The village lads find a good pasttime in hitting a pair of coconut shells and blowing flutes for driving the birds. Pests are also liable to cause damage when the plants are young. Women find much to do in transplanting, uprooting and weeding the fields. Straying cattle belonging to the owners or the neighbours can cause an equal amount of damage by eating the young plants or trampling them. During the flowering season, paddy birds and flies harm the fertility of the seeds by eating the young buds. When the seeds ripen the wild boar and the elephant become the worst offenders. They cause utter destruction of extensive acres. The human element cannot be left out as thieves may cause as much harm as any other agent. Rains and floods out of season bring at times total destruction and even cause the whole field to disappear by removing the muddy surface with the current. The natural agents of destruction may be induced by anti-social magic or the curse of a god.

After about 3 or 4 months of anxious expectation the harvesting season draws near when the heart of the peasant begins to be filled with hopes of the realization of the fruits of his labour. Much activity prevails since the gathering of the harvest, if delayed, may lead to utter loss. It is a period of great expectations and much ceremonial. Reaping begins when the ears of corn have turned golden in colour and the plant bends under the weight of the seed. Men and women assist in the reaping whilst the children help in the gathering. Special songs[3] are sung by all who work. The bundles are heaped up in the shape of a circular

1. *Wedimalwee*—long term seed-paddy.
2. *Balawee*—short term seed paddy.
3. Harvest songs. These are descriptive of the fields, the paddy plants and sung together.



Fields Being Ploughed



Harvesting

hut[1] on a spot reserved for the threshing floor (*kamatha*). The bundles of straw placed on top act as a roof. Usually the threshing floor is the highest dry spot in the area. Sudden floods and thieves are the possible danger and men have to keep close watch.[2]

From henceforth until the bringing home of the paddy the conduct, disposition and speech of those concerned assume a somewhat important bearing as on them depend to a large extent the final yield of paddy. The threshing and measuring are auspicious acts[3] beset with ritual and taboos. There is a popular belief that at the threshing floor paddy may be withheld or released by the guardians of the earth.[4] In some parts of the island buffaloes are employed in threshing the paddy. The animals are driven round and round trampling the ears until the seeds drop out on to the mats placed under.

The men experienced in threshing set out early in the morning in order to prepare the threshing floor by spreading the mats on the ground and erecting a special structure to serve as a roof and a hand support (*kathura*). Six or eight persons work at a time. No one is permitted to drink, chew, speak or perform any other irrelevant act. Strict purity of word, deed and thought should be observed. From the main heap handfulls are taken for threshing. The paddy so obtained (*maduwan*) is deposited in an under layer of mats. This is repeated five times. After the fifth time a short interval is allowed for chewing, drinking and easing themselves. It is called the *paspawara*. No mid-day meal is taken by some and the work continues until about 7 P.M. when about fifteen rounds would have been completed (*pahalospolak*). This is the end. Measuring with the *laha* or *kuruniya* commences at about 9 P.M. It is then that the favours of the earth goddess are showered on the farmer by granting a continuous stream of paddy[5] which surpasses all expectations. One of the men presses the measure on to the heap of paddy. Two other persons standing on either side fill it up. The holder of the measure throws the grain twelve times over each shoulder on to mats placed behind until the whole heap is measured. Measuring should be continuous as any pause may bring the expected flow of grain to a stop. Other men stand behind to fill

1. The heap of the ears of corn is called a *Vi-kole*.
2. Watch songs. Songs are sung during the nights in order to keep awake and some of these express the painful lot of a farmer.
3. Every act begins with worshipping the 10 directions, the measures and the paddy.
4. *Bahiraya* who are in charge of treasures and fertility of the earth and guard them in the common form of a hooded snake appear in the field meaning to do no harm.
5. *Wee dalla*—The belief is that the *Bhuma Devata* at times may bestow an unduly large yield on a righteous farmer. All farmers expect such a gift. the presence of a large cobra in the field is a sign of such a happening.

large bags.[1] Transporting the paddy home is undertaken as soon as possible either in carts or on the backs of men.

Before cooking the fresh rice various vows have to be fulfilled. Above all the seed paddy has also to be reserved. The Buddhist temple or the Devale comes in for a share of the first fruits.[2] A certain quantity is set aside for the village communal feast. As far as possible the offerings are given in the form of milk rice. The householders themselves attach importance to the partaking of fresh rice. It is the final realisation of the peasant's labour and toil. It is also the day a period of rest begins for the family. Rice is liberally cooked and eaten in plenty until all too soon the stocks are exhausted and the labour begins once more.

Chena[3] Cultivation

One of the most destructive forms of agriculture forced on a people as a result of the combination of environment and lack of knowledge is the chena form of cultivation. It is generally the practice of a people who had a semi nomadic life or possess a rude, primitive type of culture. The Veddas and the Sinhalese peasants resort to chena cultivation. The former know only this form whilst the latter engage in it as a seasonal affair. Could it be that the Sinhalese actually borrowed this form of horticulture from the Veddas who themselves learnt it from the Australoid stock that arrived from India ?

Thick forests[4] are selected as a chena. The work is laboursome and dangerous. A patch of forest in extent about two or three acres is picked out by a group of men in a village. The work of clearing the forest is begun during the dry season. The trees are felled and the jungle is cleared. A few large trees are left out for shade. Good timber is removed for sale. When the leaves have dried up the clearing is set on fire. The whole mass of wood, leaves and creepers burn until their reduction to ashes. The burnt out area is fenced[5] in a special pattern which may be worthy of study from the ethnographical point of view. A watch hut is erected within the enclosed area as watching the chenas constitutes the most exacting task of this method of cultivation.

Quick crops requiring little moisture are sown in time to sprout up

1. *Muttamalu.* These are made of strong reeds and hold ten to fifteen bags, *i.e.*, 25 bushels each.
2. Perera, A. A.—Sinhalese Folk Lore, pp. 5, 87.
3. Chena is derived from Sinhalese "hena."
4. Land privately owned or belonging to the Government may be leased for chena. Some especially the Veddas do cheans on the stealth.
5. *Dandu-weta*—timber palisade which can keep off large wild animals.



CHENA CULTIVATION

TERRACED CULTIVATION



by the receipt of a few drops of rain. Some of the crops grown are paddy, kurakkan, amu, meneri, manioc, sweet potatoes, gourds, chillies and a few other quick crops. If an individual cultivates a chena he decides to settle down with his family until the work ends for the season as that would save labour and anxiety. The same chena is cultivated for two or three years in succession until its fertility is completely exhausted when a new clearing in the adjoining forest is undertaken. Patches of jungle are cultivated in rotation. The chena land is left to run fallow for ten or twelve years when it is possible to return to the same plot over again. This pernicious system may be responsible for the elimination of some of the virgin primaeval tropical rain forests in Ceylon. But deforestation with consequent desiccation is mainly due to the wholesale clearance of forests for European owned plantations such as tea and rubber. The Ceylonese are following the same bad practice without much foresight. Chena cultivation is regularly carried out in the dry zone although the peasants of the wet zone resort to this form as a seasonal enterprise.

Terrace Cultivation

The third type of cultivation which adds a distinct beauty to the landscape of the uplands is the artificial conversion of the hill-slopes into fields. By a very ingenious but simple device the waters running down the tops of hills are channelled in such a manner as to irrigate the patches of fields that rise in tiers from the base up to the summit. The narrow banks of each terrace are built up of mud and stones found nearby and the whole system is so cleverly built up as to give it a natural appearance. The water is collected in the uppermost terrace and is led to the next when the former is fully saturated. In gradual stages the whole extent of terraces is thus irrigated. Finally the surplus water collects in the valley below where it helps to irrigate the fields which are cultivated according to the wet system of cultivation.

This type of cultivation is possible only in the uplands and requires a great deal of delicate but laborious toil. The labour spent on it is more than recompensed not only in the yield but also in beauty patterning the whole surrounding area with the natural green contours that spread serpentwise in all directions. It is the only decorative feature that the labour of man has effected in a region where tea and rubber have found an abiding home.

Under horticulture may be included garden and other produce of a non-seasonal nature. Every peasant grows a variety of other crops for

supplementing the regular food-supply. Usually a plot of land adjoining the house or a nearby high ground (*doova* or *pitiya*) is fenced around for growing bananas, manioc, sweet potato, *innala*, yams, chillies, vegetables, etc. It is usual to dig a small pit and fill it with leaves. After burning the leaves the pit is filled with manure and soil. Finally the seeds, shoots, or plants are planted. The plants have to be watered daily both in the morning and evening. Protection has to be afforded from thieves, pests, birds and beasts. Often the enclosure is made up of cadjan or leaves. A scarecrow is set up. Women and children also assist in affording protection. The thieves have a certain fear that maledictory verses[1] uttered by the owner may bring them harm.

It may be mentioned as a matter of interest that in all economic undertakings a certain misgiving prevails as to the success of the venture. So the necessity arises to guard oneself against evil and not leave room, by direct action or indirect suggestion, to be taken advantage of by the evil powers that prevail. Common parlance is avoided. Other uncommon terms are used with a view to mislead the evil spirits. Such a speech is used in agriculture[2] and hunting,[3] etc. Such terms are used mostly during threshing[4] and measuring[5] when the apparent danger would be felt directly by a loss in the yield.

Livestock

Although the Sinhalese keep cattle and plough their fields with buffaloes they are averse to stock-raising owing to the Buddhist faith, which strongly condemns breeding in captivity or slaughtering for sale or food. The majority of Buddhists eat meat but all of them feel an innate reluctance to kill. However, cattle and buffaloes are kept as draught-animals and for milking. The bulls are trained to carry loads in packs or in carts. The buffalo is tied to the plough.

The Sinhalese pay much attention to their draught animals as winners of their daily bread but they beat them mercilessly at times. Nevertheless, the animals are supplied with food and drink and are bathed regularly. It is a common village sight to see a man bathing his bulls at a ferry, stream river or pool. It is performed with as much care as

1. *Was Kawi*—By singing these verses which are composed to produce special effects the evil doer may suffer from consequences. Not only human beings but even birds and beasts are believed to meet with a similar fate.
2. *Govi Bhashawa*—Lewis, J. P.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 8—1884.
3. *Kele Bhashawa.*
4. Parsons, James—*Sp. Zey.*, Vol. V., p. 125.
5. Bell, H. C. P.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XI.—1889.

for himself. Breeding is not controlled or even selected. The animals are allowed their free choice. The dung is collected to manure the gardens. This matter of indiscriminate breeding has been responsible for the poor species[1] of cattle seen in the Island. The importance of selective breeding is being recognised and people are willingly introducing fresh blood into their stocks. The animals are named according to their colour[2] such as red one, white one, black one, spotted one, or according to a physical deformity[3] such as short one, bellied one, etc. In case of illness the animals are treated by specialists but during cattle plagues and other infectious diseases various charms are performed. Every village has its *vedarala* for treating cattle. In old age the animals are exempted from work and allowed to roam about freely in the garden until death overtakes them.

All animals are branded[4] on both sides of the belly both to serve as an identity of ownership and a precaution against stealing. It is customary to allot animals to members of the family as this not merely creates a bond of affection between man and beast but it is also believed that the fertility of the supposed owner may increase. Could this be the relic of a name giving device whereby any evil is made to befall the animal having the same name as the child ? Cattle lifting is a favourite nocturnal pastime of the rustic bravadoes who carry away poultry as well not so much for the pleasure of a night raid as for immediate personal consumption. It is believed that cattle are born as a result of former deeds in order to pay off in this life the debts that could not be settled in the previous existence.[5]

The Sinhalese drink very little cow's milk. On account of this very reason little trouble is taken over the cows. Some even do not milk them but allow the animals to roam the village. In their wanderings they cause much damage to plantations and crops and become a nuisance to motorists. The neglect of the cow and the dislike of her milk have affected adversely not only the village economy but the physique of the villager. A little ghee is prepared in some villages. Buffalo milk is often converted to curd, and ghee. A Sinhalese feast is considered incomplete without curd and honey. The best curds are prepared in the Southern Province. Five varieties (*pasgorasa*) of

1. There are three varieties the Sinhala, crossed (*demuhum*) and foreign (rata) cattle. The foreign varieties are the Sind, Bengali, Cape, Jersey, and Australian.
2. Raththa, Raththi, Sudda, Suddi, Kalla, Kalli, Kabaraya, Kabari.
3. Kota, Bandiya, Pussa.
4. De Alvis, James—*J.R.A.S.*—1874, Pt. I, p. 60.
5. Carter's songs express the very sad lot of the draught animals.

delicacies are prepared from cow's milk. Practically, every household likes to own a few head of cattle but is reluctant to keep any because of the difficulties of maintaining them. Cattle breeding and milk drinking are becoming more popular not only in the towns but also in the villages.

Even greater religious objections prevail against rearing poultry. The force of economic requirements is gradually reducing such mental attitudes and the people breed poultry for obtaining eggs and not necessarily for sale or slaughter. The villagers have always kept a few hens. The eggs are sold to the Moor trader who comes to collect them. The Moorman also collects the birds to be sold in the town. The villagers themselves very seldom eat eggs or chicken. The domesticated fowl is a mixed bird which is related to the jungle fowl of the island. European residents have imported foreign specimens of poultry into the island and this fact also has helped to throw some fresh blood into the local stocks.

Pigs are generally kept by Christian householders living along the west coastal belt of the Island. The local species though certainly related to the wild boar is smaller in size and tastes softer. It breeds profusely and is solely bred for killing. Imported varieties are also bred in yards but the village animals roam about the village serving equally well as scavengers. But the people take little notice of this fact when it is killed for food. A good number of people relish pork.

The oldest domestic pet is perhaps the dog. The local variety is a species very much akin to the jackal. In fact one may observe even today a stray cross between the dog and the jackal. The dog is very faithful to its master, requires little care or attention and breeds profusely. Although kept as domestic pets the dogs are allowed to stray in most cases and this has resulted in a large population of ownerless diseased animals some of whom turn rabid in the hot season. The dogs were given peculiar names. These are being replaced by corrupt English names. A large number of imported species are found in the Island and the richer folk take pride in possessing expensive imported varieties merely for show.

Every household owns a cat. Many others come to the house for shelter by night. It is very useful in destroying vermin especially rats. There are a few people who domesticate other animals such as sambhur, deer, squirrels, monkeys and *rilawas* and the mongoose. The mongoose who is believed to be the traditional enemy of the cobra gets the better of him and destroys him. The animal is supposed to bite

off a certain plant as an antidote against the poison. There are many stories that confirm this enmity and also the immediate retirement of the animal after the contest but no one knows to this day the actual plant. The *rilawas* can be trained to perform various acts. The Ahikuntakas keep these as show animals.

The horse, the mule, donkey and ass may have been introduced from outside as none of these is found in their wild state in Ceylon. The Sinhalese have very little use of them except for transport both in war and peace. The horse is definitely an animal for speed. It is harnessed to carts used in war and ceremonies. It is used in racing as well. Racing is considered the sport of kings but it has brought ruin to many who gambled for fortune.

Of all the domesticated animals the elephant is the biggest, most dangerous and by far the most intelligent. In its wild state as a destroyer of crops and a rogue it is dreaded by everyone. The wild elephants roam about in large herds in the thick jungles with a cow elephant as the leader. Some of them go mad when they are in rut. Such animals roam the jungle alone destroying man, beast and crops on its way. The catching, taming and training of elephants form a special technique and knowledge traditionally preserved among a certain caste[1] of people. There are various methods of catching the wild elephants, namely, kraalling, noosing and trapping in pits. The most elaborate, expensive and large scale method is that of kraalling, when the animals are driven to a strong stockade and then noosed with the help of tamed elephants. Elephants are considered noble beasts and they have their own castes.[2] They are believed to have a very good memory for remembering incidents and are vindictive. Sinhalese have used the elephant in warfare. Today the elephant is used in heavy work such as clearing jungle, felling trees, lifting stones, and transporting heavy loads in difficult country. The tusks of elephants are sold as ivory and used for making beautifully carved objects which are sold at high prices. A species of pearls is believed to be found in the tusks. It is still a mystery as to where the elephants die. No procession is complete without elephants.

Certain words are used by the mahouts for addressing elephants to do certain things. The following are some of them :

1. The *Panikkan*. The Moors also trap elephants. Also see Fowler, G. M.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 8—1883.
2. D'Oyly, John—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 91—1938, p. 241.

Sinhalese	Elephant	English
yanta	— *daha*	— to go
enta	— *daha inda*	— to come
harahata inta	— *hinda*	— stand across
nemila inta	— *daku*	— turn
danagahanta	— *daku*	— kneel
oluwa ussan inta	— *ududeri*	— raise the head
baraussanta	— *deri* / *hadderi hadderi*	— lift
baratiyanta	— *pitchith*	— put down
tallukaranta / aninta	— *puru*	— push
hemin hemin kakula ussanta	— *puru bila*	— slowly raise the foot
baninta	— *nayaka*	— scold
kate tiyana de bima daanta / ata arinta	— *pitchith*	— release, drop
payin paganta	— *bila maha*	— trample
ottuwenta / seren thallukaranta	— *puru maha*	— scold, push hard
allanta	— *hadderi hidari*	— hold, catch
passata yanta	— *telle*	— go back
kakula bimata	— *bila*	— lift the leg
danagahanta	— *kida, dame*	— kneel
ida denta	— *ida*	step aside

Of the birds domesticated by the Sinhalese the most popular are the mynah, parrot, selalihiniya and the pigeons. The first three can be taught to speak. The *mynah* and the *selalihini* talk very well and are intelligent enough to answer questions as well. The sparrows are encouraged to roost in the roof or build their nests in a vessel or box specially left for them. The sudden departure of these birds from a house is considered an ill omen. There are very few birds in Ceylon about whom a *sandesa*[1] is not written.

1. A *Sandesa* is a short epic poem in which a message is transmitted from one place to another by means of a bird flying through the air. All are prototypes of the classic example given by Kalidasa in his *Meghaduta*.

XIII

ARTS AND CRAFTS

THE AVERAGE modern Sinhalese villager thinks very little about art and beauty. Aesthetic considerations seldom evoke an emotional appreciation with any true sense of understanding. Religious faith and devotion to the Buddha have submerged all critical judgment, sense of appreciation and enjoyment. Any image, any painting, any edifice, in fact anything connected with religion serves fully the main purpose for which it stands. They are concerned with the dominant idea, the central theme, the story or the moral and not the external manifestation embodying that idea or ideal. In a way their view may be more in keeping with their philosophy of life and religious beliefs. So they look at art from the spiritual point of view and all their art is spiritual. Secular art does not interest them save from the utilitarian aspect. They look at religious objects with spiritual awe. Such an outlook that makes the people least critical may suggest the explanation for the degeneration of art and the horrible expressions that receive worship and honour in the name of religion. It is not surprising that the critical eye has not developed among the majority of Sinhalese when so many of the so called educated evince no interest in art and culture. Advancement in culture is a true index to the progress of a nation. Appreciation of natural beauty in lake and stream, in mountain and valley, in sunrise and sunset, is not completely lacking; nor do such lovely things fail to capture the imagination or arrest attention. Since the nation places no value on art and culture, since the need for beauty is not stressed, the peasant does not care. He has no time in the new system for such things. It is a material world with no spiritual values.

The Sinhalese have deviated from spiritual values and, today, they find that the ancient traditions have been forgotten in their detail and true meaning. But the symbols of an art and cultural tradition have continued. But symbolism without a true understanding of the deeper significance of the ideals presents an unintelligible jumble of figures. The practical tradition has died out whilst the theoretical details used as guiding principles remain in ancient texts preserved to this day.

Owing to the years of neglect the artistic impulse fails to find expression. The art has remained static, archaic and undeveloped. New ideas and ideals could not find expression through improved media owing to the apathy induced by changing values. Degeneration set in. The artistic tradition all but disappeared.

Sinhalese art is a thing of the past. At the present time there is little that is worthy of Sinhalese art. In the decorative art of the Sinhalese geometric, linear and floral designs present a beauty, a harmony and an adaptability that would win praise even in comparison with the best work of today. The artists have lost that certain sureness of line and bold strokes of the brush. But the professional artists still continue the same old tradition without being able to produce anything half so beautiful. True modern Sinhalese art remains to be born.

In the other arts as well the modern standards have fallen far below the ideals expressed in the texts. No instruction in these subjects is available, as leisure is denied one seldom spends any time in the pursuit of art. The dance and the drama continue to be despised as professional arts practised by the lower grades of society for the amusement of the masses. Music has earned the same bad reputation. The cultured and educated people appreciated and encouraged the Western dance, drama and music simply because they had lost all sense of proportion, values and ideals and were so denationalised as not to understand the Sinhalese arts. It is true that Sinhalese arts as are preserved and practised in most places are nothing more than amateurish efforts.

Why a nobler tradition failed to survive one is not sure. Whether the tradition of the more developed,more refined or more spiritual arts disappeared for want of institutions, patrons or governmental tolerance or whether these branches of art were practised in certain families or groups of foreigners are still debateable questions.

There are references to art and painting in the Sinhalese chronicles.[1] The prevalence of dramatic art may be inferred from Sinhalese *literature*.[2] But these traditions appear to have been forgotten as a result of frequent disintegration of the political system and social order. The modern Sinhalese drama has been borrowed from South India.[3] These were staged purely for musical enjoyment. The musical airs were borrowed from Hindusthani. Historical plots began to be woven around merely to give an interesting setting for the songs. Little

1. *Mahavamsa*—English Translation
2. Pannakitti—*Sahitya ha Samajaya* p. 56
3. W. A. de Silva—Sinhalese Theatre—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XVIII

originality was introduced. Neither did the plays in any way depict a modern society. The drama was taken to mean any stage entertainment calculated to pass a few noctural hours even at the risk of it appearing a bit vulgar. The drama is now assuming a different shape showing clear signs of improvement towards a cultural force of great social, national and artistic value.

It is more often in reference to arts that the people are in the habit of making a verbal distinction between Sinhalese and Kandyan art as though they are distinct types. Both these mean the same thing. There is no such thing as Kandyan art. There never was. There was only Sinhalese art, dance, painting, arts and crafts. This usage owes its origin to a political division conveniently effected by the Dutch and silently perpetuated by the English. As was to be expected the maritime areas in contradistinction to the Kandyan areas would be the first to be influenced by the foreigner. One of two courses is possible. Persistence in the place of impact and then disappearance or migration to the interior. On the arrival of the foreigner the arts migrated to the inland areas and continued as Kandyan. But it is the same tradition that prevailed before that came to be preserved.

The Sinhalese dance[1] is restricted to the males although now the girls are also learning the art. Boys and men dance in groups but never in embracing pairs between male and female. The dancing tradition is still preserved in certain castes and the art is practised as a profession by these castes, *e.g.*, oli and berava. Of course people of other castes also indulge in dancing specially of a professional nature. The Pattinis and Kapuralas of Goigama caste who are in charge of devales engage in a mild form of ceremonial dancing.

The dance may be studied from four different aspects :

(*a*) folk dance,
(*b*) demonological,
(*c*) devale,
(*d*) acrobatic.

In all forms of Sinhalese dancing time and rhythm are maintained by the percussion of drums of various shapes calculated to give different tones. The sound of a drum is seldom modulated. The cleverness of the drummer is now judged by the loudness of tone. At times the sounds of drums become deafeningly overpowering as to drown the jingling of bells and the singing of songs and stanzas. The drummer little realises the

1. Sinhalese literature mentions dancing girls beautifully dressed performing in temples or circuses.

inconvenience caused by the loudness and monotony but keeps on beating louder and louder with his bare hands. One striking feature in the whole system of Sinhalese dancing of all types is the characteristic movement of the steps and the body. The feet are placed parallel to and not pointing towards the audience whilst the body swayed forward and backwards periodically punctuated by a circular movement for easing. Such an apparently awkward pose is difficult of explanation. Could it be that every dancer used to bear a drum from the waist in order to keep time for himself or was it that his skirt-like dress precluded easy lateral movement.

Sinhalese folk dances are still preserved in their purity among certain castes[1] whilst others find expression as games by children or agricultural prerequisites. Dancing deserves separate treatment as one of the most interesting elements of national culture still distinguishing the Sinhalese. Boys as well as grown up individuals indulge in dancing and there is nothing to prevent the oldest teachers participating. Many years of apprenticeship are required to gain proficiency in the Sinhalese dance. A good strong body, well-proportioned figure, handsome appearance and natural ability are pre-requisites for a student of folk-dancing. On the day of graduation in the art a charming ceremony is staged at the Devale in the presence of friends and relations when the graduands actually perform in the Devale.

The dances are known by various names according to the object carried in the hand or the subject matter of the stanzas recited. These are combined with dramatic movements where imitation may be detected. Among these performances may be specially mentioned the *vannams*.[2] The *pantheru*, *udekki*, and other dances are as interesting and well-executed today not only by the traditional castes but also in all schools. Sinhalese dancing reminds one still of the ancient splendour and pageantry. On such special occasions as the Kandy Esala Perahera may be witnessed some of the best dancing as practised by the professional classes.

The dance constituted an indispensable feature of early religion and magic and still remains active where early beliefs influence the mind of man. The purpose of the dance in demonological observances such as *bali* and *tovil* is primarily to sustain the interest between the dancers and the audience. It also helps the magician to work himself up to a

1. The castes are the *Nakathi*.

2. These are 18 in number and describe the movements of various birds and animals. The dancer tries to imitate the movement and actually some of these are very cleverly performed.

frenzy. The dance is accompanied by dramatization both masked and otherwise. Nevertheless, in the *yakun neteema* the personification of the spirit concerned is complete. Here the dances are vigorous, and fearsome more so than in *bali*. A gentle, less vigorous, more laissez-faire type of dance prevails in the *bali*. There is more grace and gentility. Whilst in the *tovil* the dancer acts as the devil himself in the *bali* he is a suppliant asking for blessings and protection.

Dancing is associated with the ceremonial and ritual of the Devales. These are occasional performances staged in the Devale precincts or as in the case of the previous classes at the premises of the layman. The Kapuralas are lay incumbents of Devales. And these belong to the Brahamin or Goigama families. Hence, naturally the dancing consists of mild rhythmic movements or as often happens mere gyrations.

A semblance of dancing is indulged in during acrobatic performances for easing the limbs. Time is kept by the beat of the drum. Actually some of the acrobats are good dancers belonging to special castes. Hence one may well imagine that the dance formed a prelude to many other forms of bodily movement.

Music,[1] for some reason or other did not develop in the same way as other arts of the Sinhalese. Strangely enough music and drama have left no definite evidence of even a possible development that has fallen into desuetude. One cannot infer that the Sinhalese, because of this negative evidence of both instruments and music, could not appreciate such refined arts. It is true that many instruments enabling the production of a developed musical art do not find reference. None has been preserved. Here again the popular musical instruments endorse the feeling that what prevailed was a sort of folk music. At the present day many European and Indian instruments have gained currency owing to the fact that such music is appreciated by the educated for no reason other than their ignorance of Sinhalese music. The educational system and the mere copying of Western fashions almost succeeded in branding Sinhalese music, even if such a thing did exist, as vulgar. The melodies[2] and tunes of Indian culture are beginning to breathe life into the national growth on which the parasites of alien music fattened. The Indian instruments, chief among them being the *tabla*, violin and *seraphina*, have almost become naturalised. The others are accommodated in homes that still savour of a dominant

1. C. M. Fernando—*J.R.A.S.*, 1893, 1913—also on Sinhalese music.
Nell, Louis—*J.R.A.S.*—Vol. III., No. 10.
2. Bandara Mahawalatenna—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXI—1908. Kandyan music.

alien culture.

The popular musical instruments actually belonging to the Sinhalese may be grouped under the three heads, viz. :

1. Percussion.
2. Wind.
3. String.

The instruments of percussion include a variety of drums. The frames are made of light wood (mostly *suriya*) with the eye or both eyes covered with the skin of goats or monkeys. The sound is produced directly with the fingers or a stick or cane. A different system of notation from the classical "Sarigama" is used both in music and dance. The time is practically the same. Some of the drums are used in war as well as in peace, the tunes being selected to suit each occasion. The *udekki* is used in dance. The *rabana* is usually played by a group of women on festive occasions. A miniature of this is used in *viridu* songs. The *tammettama* which has two separate parts provides two striking surfaces and heralds the approach of Bhikkhus. It also leads the funeral procession with its eyes covered with cloth for producing a mournful sound. The funeral music produced on these and other accompanying instruments is some of the most moving that the writer has listened to. In the *bumbiya* the tympanum is tied to the mouth of a clay pot and functions in agricultural ceremonies and new year celebrations. Among the other percussion instruments some metal objects may be included. These are the *kaitalam* used for keeping time, the *chal' valalla* and the bronze bell.

The wind instruments are few in number, the most popular being the *horanava*, *kombuva* and *nalava*. Reed pipes could also be seen in distant villages. A toy wind instrument made by wrapping a coconut frond around a split leaf in the shape of a cone gives a very loud sound. The classical example of a wind instrument is of course the conch which has attached to it a magical significance now a days as it is blown in the devales, temples and processions.

String instruments are rare; none the less a popular imitation of the *vina* made with a coconut shell, reed and string and skin or oil paper is sold as a toy. It is said that the violin[1] originated in Lanka. It should have existed in ancient Ceylon and some form of a string instrument a *vina* or violin should be found as yet unknown.

The folk poetry of the Sinhalese embodies a wealth of music and sound which when sung according to proper tunes inspires with their

1. Fox Strangways, A. H.—The Music of Hindustan.

simple melodies. Very few people can render these songs as they should. Vocal music provided little entertainment during leisure. The songs were sung for an occasion with a set purpose. In agriculture, travelling, mining and sailing, etc., both men and women sang and sing today. It may be that the songs sung during other activities are lost through disuse. Seldom was song accompanied by music. But today singing to the accompaniment of instrumental music is popularly attempted but with depressing results. Indian airs are sung and Indian music is spreading. In both song and music so far nothing original has been produced.

Little is known about the ancient Sinhalese drama. That dramatic art was not cultivated by the Sinhalese is not a true statement of fact since literary[1] references to drama although rare are known. In its present form the drama is a modern adaptation of Sanskrit plays but the origin must be traced to South India.[2] The following dramatic performances[3] may be witnessed today :

1. Rukada — Marionettes
2. Kolan — Mask dance
3. Nadagam — Popular plays
4. Nataka — Drama

Puppet show (*rukada neteema*) may have existed side by side with the *nadagam* performances but the actual art of making wooden puppets may be old. Only in a few isolated suburban areas is it possible to come across a person who is conversant with the art of dramatising wooden puppets. Apart from the actual fashioning of the figures great skill is required to put up a good show. Patience, understanding of human emotions, thorough knowledge of the story and manipulative dexterity are pre-requisites of success. The movements are controlled by strings and clever manipulation counts for success. Ventriloquism helps to co-ordinate movements with words. The complete show is controlled by one or two men. It is an extremely fine and delicate art. In the whole of the South there is only one man who knows the art[4] to fashion and perform rukada dances.

1. *Mahavamsa*, Ch. X., Vol. 87 ; Ch. 66, Vol. 132 ; Ch. 73, Vols. 82–86 : (*a*) mention is made of strolling plays, theatres and performances ; *see* (*b*) shadow plays.
2. (*a*) de Silva, W. A.—*J.R.A.S.* ; (*b*) Students Magazine, 1860–1, Vol. II., p. 25 ; (*c*) de Silva, W. A.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 18, No. 54—1908, p. 90, dramatic poetry and the literature of the Sinhalese ; (*d*) *Navalanka by Chandradeva*—Introduction.
3. Shadow plays—This is an extinct art referred to in the *Manavamsa*.
4. In the village of Beragoda three miles from Kosgoda Railway Station lives a man of the Nekati caste, who has a good collection. He cuts, paints and dresses and manipulates himself.

The people enjoy these shows immensely but rarely find occasion to visit them. It is a peripatetic art practised as a profession by certain castes and classes. The "chief man" of the village extends his patronage. The lesser folk also crowd in. A gate is charged. The show lasts only for a short duration. After a night or two the troupe leaves in search of other patrons. One invariably finds such shows at fairs, carnivals and exhibitions.

Whatever may be the origin of the *nadagam* it was certainly a communal effort of a village unit to organise a way of entertainment. Such shows are very popular and may have existed in some similar form before its revived introduction from South India. The movement has practically died out in the villages since the entire management direction and composition remained in the hands of the rustic bands whose enthusiasm alone could not outlive the efforts of the drama staged by townsfolk. Many historical and legendary stories were shown on the stage.

Kolam neteema was a masked performance where the comic and the ludicrous aspect of life was stressed. The dominant character was the jester (*bawabuhutaya* or *kawataya*). The life depicted was that of the ordinary type taken from popular stories but the show dragged on the whole night. There were no acts, scenes or a stage. Very little of the dramatic element prevailed but it was not altogether wanting or absent.

The *nadagam* began to be gradually superseded by drama from the beginning of the European period and during the last century by a change in the structure and subject matter. The introduction of musical airs borrowed from India dominated the play. The people liked the music and demanded more. But other types of the drama also came to be written although the musical drama was the most popular. The satire, historical play, and Jataka story also found popularity. The birth of the modern drama was now ushered in but the social, national and propaganda value of the stage was never appreciated. The drama failed to flourish in the hands of a few professional men in a changing social order. It became a back number unworthy of the respectable classes owing to the atmosphere and language which became debased as the drama declined. Very few even today realise fully the cultural importance of the drama as a medium of education, instruction and entertainment for all alike. Music, drama and painting are factors contributing to the effective performance of *bali* dance. It is worthy of note that all three arts are still practised by the people engaged in this

profession and they have been responsible in a good measure for the preservation of these arts. On this point demonology in so far as it helped to suppress all other dramatic effort supplied the necessary dramatic enjoyment by the performance of *bali*. Perhaps the popularity of *yakun-neteema* may be the direct cause of the disappearance of ancient Sinhalese dramatic art.

The art of painting[1] is practised not only in the learned schools but also among less educated folk who employ it in the portrayal of demonological figures. It has been connected with magic from ancient times. At the present time Sinhalese painting is preserved among certain communities whose hereditary vocation is the decoration of temples, painting the temple and *bali* images. Amongst these people two traditions are followed in two sects. Those who paint the temples are the "*Sittaru*" and the bali-painters are the "*Bali-eduro*." The details of the techinque have been handed down in learned texts but the families handed it down from memory and hand-books.

There can be no doubt that at least two schools of painting gained currency. One is the classical and the other the indigenous. The latter was handed down from ancient times and the cave temples and Kandyan paintings preserve this lost tradition.[2] The art of painting the *bali* images is the oldest relic of this lost art of indigenous painting.

Painting may be studied under the following subjects ·

{ Bali
Rukada
Images

{ Temple
Fresco
Cloth

{ Masks
Lacquer

All these subjects should provide interesting material for the study of indigenous Sinhalese painting. The painting of objects religious, secular and magical, had an irresistible appeal which enhanced both the beauty and impressiveness of the images. The puppets are in all cases

1. Oldenburg, H.—*Dipawamsa*, 1879—p. 210, wall-painting.
2. Coomaraswamy, A. K.—*J.R.A.S.*, 1907—Vol. XVIV.
Coomaraswamy, A.—Sinhalese Art—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XVIV—1906.

coated with natural paints and then coated over with oil. The oil acts both as a preservative and insecticide.

Bali painting is a traditional art where the images are moulded out of fine soft clay on a platform so as to present a frontal view only. All the detailed contours of the body and limbs are dilineated. The surface is first painted with *makulu* and when the white paint is about to dry the other natural colours are applied. The painter has to delineate the dress and ornaments with the brush. Oil is sprinkled to prevent cracking of the clay which lasts a few days without cracking. The production of these painted *bali* figures within so short a time in such detailed accuracy requires good training, proficiency in the art and confidence in oneself. The painters deserve credit for their certain sureness of line and firm sweep of the brush The pictures are drawn from memory and no models are ever used.

The ancient art of painting is in the last stage of disappearance. The use of local dyes will follow a similar fate. Cheap foreign dyes which possess neither the freshness nor the bright natural effect of the local dyes are used by most of the artists. In painting images[1] one fact of great significance has to be borne in mind. It must be accompanied by a set ritual and performed by the expert at the auspicious moment lest death and disaster befall not only the artist but the employer as well. The dread of the unknown and the superhuman is greatest when portraying powerful deities, the greatest of them all being the Buddha.

The wall paintings of the temples are still executed with the greatest care both in the preparation of the mural surface and the portrayal of the figures in relief or flat. The work is carried out by people of certain castes in whose families the art is traditionally handed down. But these men have neither, skill nor ability, understanding nor knowledge with the result they copy the actual drawings painted on the walls of early temples. They reproduce neither art nor painting but produce a hideous spectacle of religious images. It is better that the old art disappeared rather than such objects be perpetuated as art.

Fortunately signs of Indian inspiration are visible in the technique of painting. A new orientation is on the horizon for the revival of Sinhalese art and painting among the artisan classes. The Eastern school of modern Indian painting practised at cultural centres such as Bengal and Santiniketan will greatly influence not only Ceylonese painting but also the temple painting of today. Kelaniya temple has already

1. Netra Mangallaya. *Mahavamsa* refers to Parakrama the Great as having conducted one—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXI—1909.

given a lead in this new activity. There the spirit and technique of Ajanta breathe again.

At some time unknown in the history of painting a curious process that has taken place was the virtual transference into cloth of some of the temple wall paintings dealing with religious themes taken specially from Jatakas and the life of the Buddha. These painted cloths are called *Chitra* cloths varying in size from small to very large. Practically the same technique is used in cloth painting as in wall painting, the only difference being the absence of lime and paste in the case of cloth. The *chitra* painted cloths are objects of extreme beauty and artistic expression of the popular indigenous school. These are more interesting as ethnographic records of the contemporary times preserving to this day the manner of dress, type of ornaments, kind of weapons and other details of 17th century Sinhalese society.

These cloths owing to their religious significance are used in temples and devales as curtains, awnings and canopies for temporary pavilions. Very few of the cloths are so utilised today but are hidden away to be moth eaten and decayed. The incumbents of these temples and devales are taking advantage of their antiquity by selling them for money.

The same technique is employed in wood painting and the painting of masks used in dancing, comic shows and devil dancing. The actual paint used differs in each case but the application also remains similar. The colours used are bright, bordering on the point of gaudiness but giving a pleasing effect. The surface remains bright and shiny. On the whole the art is unmistakeably popular.

The Sinhalese have inherited a legacy of beautiful patterns[1] that have been cleverly adapted for filling up empty spaces of walls and ceilings, columns and buildings. Most of them are beautiful, pleasing and suitable. All such decorative designs may be grouped under the following four heads: viz.

geometrical,
zoomorphic,
vegetable,
symbolic.

The systematic disappearance of Sinhalese patterns during the last 400 years of foreign rule is not a fact for surprise. It is but natural that the alien culture with ruling prestige should deal a staggering blow to most things national including art. It is also a matter for contentment that good works are still preserved in ancient temples thereby

1. de Silva, T. U.—Sinhalese patterns.

giving one an idea of the decorative genius of the people. It also speaks for the tenacity of the art and the conservatism of the craftsmen.

The complexity of culture traits may be judged as an index to the development of a culture though of course some of the primitive cultures are complex as well. Sinhalese crafts are fast disappearing to the background due to the arrival of cheap machine made artifacts. Nevertheless Ceylon arts and crafts are not even in a transitional stage since the process of industrialisation has not even commenced. The result will be the total disappearance of indigenous arts and crafts with their special techniques and processes long before they become industrialised and this would result in the loss of the traditional craftsmen.

Man has employed wood for fashioning tools since the dawn of humanity when he acquired the ability to manipulate implements. Stone followed later. And then metals replaced both on account of their pliability, strength and durability. Nevertheless all these materials are employed even to this day.

The disappearance of the national arts and crafts can be explained by a multiplicity of causes chief among the number are competition with machines, absence of encouraging patronage, change of fashions, and the disorganisation of the social order. The craftsmen work with tools and processes belonging to the last century. Consequently they must sell their products at a higher price than the objects turned out by the machines. The people could prefer the cheaper object that is also in keeping with the fashion of the time. Hence the local made wares have in most cases become curios purchased by the rich or the tourist.

There are no proper schools for teaching the arts and crafts. The old system of apprenticeship has lost its respectability but may be still observed. Very little scope can be found for the national arts and crafts. However a few arts and crafts are still carried on because they still fulfill an essential purpose in society even in competition and incorporation of the foreign systems. There is also a certain stigma attached to some of the professions which, if conducted on a large scale by rich men in the cities under modern conditions is free from any censure.

The carpenter's craft has come down from ancient times though much of the old tools and techniques are not used today. The carpenter is essential to society more so on account of the individual freedom to build freely and also the introduction of European household furniture[1] which has replaced all previous types. Seldom is a carpenter required

1. European furniture : Pearson—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXXI, No. 81, 1928—pp. 81, 82, 381. Reimers, E.—*J.R.A.S.*, No 91 of 1938—p. 181.

in the construction of a house in the village because the majority of houses are mud-built huts with cadjan roofs. The villagers themselves erect such buildings. Whenever a house is put up it assumes a size, shape and site not at all in keeping with the ability of the person or the environment of the place. The carpenter takes sole charge as designer, architect and builder. In towns the carpenter attends to only the wood-work. The buildings are all on the European model and plan unbecoming both of the climate and landscape. Today a few buildings show external signs of the local craftsmanship in the roof, window or a door. But the whole orientation remains foreign. The people of Moratuwa have earned a reputation as good carpenters and they are not undeserving of it. The carpenters still resort to an ancient system of measuring and use a variety of local and foreign tools. The system of measures is as follows :

nóol, kadatheeru, angal, wiyatha, riyana, bambaya, gau.

The following tools are in use :—

niyana	—	chisel
mitiya	—	hammer
atakoluwa	—	mallet
kiyatha	—	saw
peera	—	file
yaththa / *yathuketaya*	—	plane
mattam lella	—	ruler
buruma	—	borer
koduwa	—	measure

Stone mason's art resembles the carpenter's in so far as the technique employed was allied to carpentry although the tools needed had to be stronger. It may be presumed on the remaining material evidence that at an early age stone mason's art had attained considerable development as it could not have been possible to fashion such monumental works as irrigation systems, solid buildings and carvings. That art has degenerated but is still practised amongst a few families. Even today temple architecture is preferred in stone, the pillars, entrances and porches being beautifully carved. One can still admire the beauty of stone carving at the New Temple of the Tooth Relic and the Trinity College Chapel. The transition from wood to stone in building construction is also in evidence in Ceylon as in India.

The smiths though specialising in various branches of the profession

according to the metal dealt with belong to one caste. Today, there are balcksmiths, silversmiths and goldsmiths. The heavier metal works in copper, bronze, brass and iron are undertaken by blacksmiths whilst the finer more artistic objects in silver and gold, jewellery and ornaments are made by the others. The smithy is a common institution in each village. It consists of an anvil, hammer and forge and a skin foot bellows set up in a cadjan shed. The chief occupation of a village blacksmith is the fashioning of domestic implements such as knives, axes, hoes, picks, and scrapers ; making of iron rims for carts and shoeing of bulls. On rare occasions they may cast a temple bell but today this is done by metal workers.

Since the village buys most of its requirements at the bazaar the smith is not kept fully occupied. He finds it a part time job which has to be supplemented with other activities. Many of these have abandoned the profession for another since there is no hope for it in the face of foreign competition. As late as 1904 there were foundries and iron industry, but these have disappeared altogether. Even the local blacksmiths use imported iron.

In all economic undertakings of a primitive type a great deal of ritual is still observed not so much as a means of actual realisation of the desired effect but more as a possible safeguard against an act of omission or commission whereby the unforeseen and unknown dangers may be avoided. It is so in every case. The superstitious emotion has to be satisfied. Traditional customs should be observed. Taboos are enforced. Even stars are consulted. Every possible care is taken to ensure success. Saturday, Wednesday, and Tuesday are avoided. Thursday is the best. The blacksmith works by a process of repeated heating and beating. This is how he makes a knife.

A strip of iron is split in two along three quarter of its length leaving the other quarter to be shaped into the handle. A strip of steel is introduced into the cleft. This is heated in a fire until red-hot. The fire is made of coconut shell charcoal set up on a raised mound. Skin foot bellows[1] helps to maintain a high temperature. By hard and constant beating with an iron hammer whilst the piece of iron is held by a pair of tongs placed on an iron anvil alternated by heating the shape and cutting edge are obtained. The unalloyed part is shaped into the handle. The cutting edge has to be tempered for durability. This is effected by moderately heating and dipping the object in a solution of

1. Two types of bellows : the hand-bellow and foot-bellows.

salt and acid.[1] The process is repeated. The edge is then filed. In the ancient days potash was used for tempering. The wooden handle is affixed by means of two iron rings of different sizes. One is called *kandawilla* and the other *iratawilla.*

Copper bronze and brass objects are fashioned by craftsmen who follow the art as a hereditary profession. The majority of metal objects, since they are made chiefly in the uplands have assumed the generic name of Kandyan ware. Apart from the primitive methods of beating, heating and alloying for obtaining malleability casting is also practised. Nailing, revetting and welding help to fasten the metal pieces together. Certain processes of decoration are known chiefly carving, repousset, chasing, and in-lay.

Casting by the direct method of pouring the liquid metal into a mould and then breaking the mould is the older one whereby simple objects could be fashioned. The *cire perdue* technique is also known and practised for large objects. Wax is used to make the mould, a lump of bees-wax is made exactly in the shape of the article required. Any carvings or decoration may be effected on the surface of the wax model. A small opening is left on the top to be later used as a runnel for pouring the metal. It is called a *thal katta.* The next stage consists of preparing a mixture of clay ground together with soft-sand (*welimeti*) and adding water for converting the whole mass into a thick porridge. Then apply this all round the wax model to the thickness of one-eighth (*kadatheeruwa*) of an inch. Dry the model in the sun. A second application of the clay porridge should be applied and dried as before. The third application should be in all about an inch in thickness. This mixture should contain thick sand and must be thicker. Dry again. Two openings should be maintained at convenient positions for pouring the liquid. When the clay has properly dried, the whole mass should be heated in the strong hot sun until the wax completely melts away and escapes through the openings provided. The dried clay mould should now be carefully handled. Pure metal is seldom used not only because of its expense but because of its softness. The composition of alloys differs in the percentage of each ingredient with different peoples and different ages. This has been proved by an analysis of ancient metal objects. But there is a standard for each alloy. The commonest alloys are :

1. The charcoal of wood recovered from mud is superior to that of ordinary wood.

bronze (2 copper : 1 lead)
brass[1] (1 copper : 1 zinc — *tuthanagam*)
five metals (gold, silver, copper, iron, lead)

The pure metals or the ingredients of the alloy are melted in the crucible (*kowe*)[2] until glowing heat shows on the surface. This stage is known as *thelenchi gahala thibeema*. Now the liquid metal could be poured into the mould which is also prepared simultaneously by heating it red-hot in a fire and removing the firewood around the mould. The mould is then surrounded with coconut husk leaving the opening of the mouth for conveniently pouring the metal. The liquid should now be carefully and gently poured into the mould whilst the surface dross and dirt are kept off by means of a stick (*pandan leeya*). It is important to remember that the liquid must be poured in a continuous even stream until the mould is filled and no bubbles of air released. Then cover the mould and allow the mould to cool. After a few days break up the mould. The rough surface and the angularities should be filed and polished.

The profession of the silver and gold smiths though apparently one of great antiquity seems to have been influenced by South Indian workers during the latter stages. Much of the work done now shows this by the style and terms in use. The technique and terminology are South Indian. The smith is in great demand in the villages as jewellery constitutes an ornament as well as an investment enhanced in value by its suitability of transmission as a part of the dowry. Every woman makes an article of jewellery. The gold is supplied by the craftsman who works in gold, silver and copper either in their pure form or as alloys. By alloying the purity of gold is diminished but this process helps to cater to a large clientele. The pure gold is called *Vinsiyanu* gold consisting of ten *mattu*.[3] Sovereign gold is only eight *mattu*. The purity of gold is tested by rubbing on the touch stone and adding acid to see whether the particles burn.

Precious metals are weighed as follows :—

1 Madati seed	=	1 Mancadi
12 Mancadi	=	1 Pagodi
2 Pagodis and 4 mancadi	=	1 gold sovereign

1. The alloy is believed to be better when an extra amount of copper is included in the compostiion.
2. The crucible, which can stand much heat, is made of a mixture of kaolin (*kandal*) and ash of burnt paddy chaff (*dahayya*). The paste is mixed with water into a fine consistency. The vessel is shaped by hand and dried in the sun. The broken crucibles are discarded.
3. 24 carots—8 mattu ; 1? carots—7 mattu ; 15 carots—6 mattu.

By adding four *mancadis* to one gold sovereign the metal is reduced by one mattu. However, inferior gold may be converted to pure gold by burning off the other metal. The inferior the alloy the harder the metal becomes. The inferior gold may be reduced to pure gold by the addition of an equal weight of silver. Heat the two together until they melt. Then pour out the liquid into a vessel. The scales-like dross should be burnt out.

This is how a metal object is made. A clay vessel is filled with ash below and paddy chaff above. Coconut shell charcoal is used for the fire which is lit in the middle of the vessel and arranged with a clay pipe for blowing.

The metals are mixed in a crucible made of kaolin, plumbago and chaff. An object similar to the one required is made of lead for making a mould. This is pressed between two turtle shells; after removing the dummy the two shells are tied fast with an opening for pouring the liquid metal. Now the actual metal is heated and on reaching the stage of *telenchivima* the liquid is gently poured into the mould. On cooling the object is filed and polished with a steel stick (*wanekatuwa*). The third stage is chemical polishing (*palippu demeema*). The chemicals[1] are placed in a vessel and heated together with a piece of pure gold and some water. The water will evaporate leaving a white substance. When this is again heated dry over a fire it turns a bright golden colour. This stage is called *wedippuweema*. To this substance add some water. Place the articles requiring polish. Heat them together stirring with a stick. Remove the articles after some time and heat over the charcoal fire until the appearance of a bright golden colour. Cool in water, wash well and polish.

If it is required that the object be adorned with precious stones two ways[2] of setting stones are practised. The first method is to hold the stone as if placed within the claws. The second way is to sink the stone within the metal.

The stone cutters are of two kinds. Those who deal with large blocks of gneiss for building purposes and others who cut precious stones.[3] Both are very ancient skilled jobs that are languishing for want of local patronage. Whenever it is necessary to cut and carve stones for purposes of large masonry buildings South Indian craftsmen [4] have to be employed. The art of gem-cutting still finds local adherents among the Sinhalese and Muslim Communities.

1. *Seenakkaram*, 1 portion ; *Wedilunu*, 2 portions ; *Kanalunu*, 1 portion.
2. (*a*) Dethi Bendeema : (*b*) Hera Bendeema.
3. Wayland, E. J.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXIX, No. 68, P. 135–161—stones of Navaratne.
4. Temple of the Tooth and Trinity College Chapel are two of the largest modern stone buildings.

Pottery[1]

Pottery is one of the oldest human arts practised throughout the whole world. The development assumed different lines in different parts. In India pottery had reached a height of development not second to that of any other land. One may safely assume its antiquity in Ceylon also. The making of bricks and a variety of tile has also been coming down from ancient times. Terra cotta and other clay figurines were popularly made. But today pottery vessels, bricks, and tiles are not locally manufactured on any large scale. The special type of clay required for making pottery is commonly found along river basins persumably deposited there during floods. Kelaniya has a reputation throughout the island for domestic pottery, bricks and tiles.

Red clay which is an alluvial deposit is common in this area up to a depth of about six feet. Below this level is black clay specially useful for tile making. In parts the red clay contains a fair proportion of sand which otherwise can be obtained from river beds or in layers in the clay. The proportion of the mixture for pottery is as shown below :—

Red clay	..	2 portions
Black clay	..	1 portion
Sandy clay	..	1 portion
Sand dust	..	½ portion

Each variety of clay is cleansed and freed of all impurities such as dead leaves, bits of wood, pebbles and stone. It is then passed through a sieve. The different varieties are mixed and then further removed of impurities by means of a strip of bamboo. The compound is piled up on a large sack on which sand dust is sprinkled to prevent sticking. Water is then added. And the whole thing is trampled under foot until a proper consistency is reached. The mixture is kneaded into a nice dough.

Now the potter places on the wheel a lump of clay sufficient to make about ten vessels at a time. An assistant sitting near by helps to turn the wheel whilst the potter shapes the vessels. a wet rag is kept near at hand specially for shaping the mouth of pots. A piece of ekel, umbrella wire or a pen knife suffices to cut out the required shape whilst turned on the wheel. Having obtained the desired shape the vessel is left in the sun for about 2½ hours or if within doors for a day.

When the clay has set and the vessel has hardened a wooden mallet is employed to beat out the walls from outside whilst holding a stone

1. Coomaraswamy, A. K.—*Sp. Zey.*, Vol. IV., Pt. 13, 14, 15—Sinhalese Earthenware.

within. In the case of narrow mouthed objects a short pole replaces the stone. It should again be dried as before.

The final stage is completed by beating down the surface, scraping and removing angularities by means of a bamboo strip whilst the object is in motion on the wheel. The vessel is again left in the sun for about 1½ days until the surface shows a whitish colour. Sunshine is essential for the final stage of drying.

The oven is a temporary structure of small size consisting of a square made up of roof tiles placed on bricks. The vessels are carefully stacked within. As many as a hundred could be stacked at a time, a layer of straw is placed over the vessels and the whole thing is covered with clay. The firing commences early morning on any day except on a Wednesday. A steady but low fire is maintained for about twelve hours. Then the heat is increased for about six hours. After midnight the fire is left to die out or is removed. During the rainy seasons firing may be prolonged by about six hours, *i.e.*, until morning. The vessels are then ready for use.

Very little polychrome ware is made today. Even when made these contain nothing of artistic value, the dyes used fading quickly. Nevertheless, toys are made for applying paint. Red slip is sometimes applied and a white encrustation serves as a means of decoration. If a red slip is applied or linear decoration desired action must be taken at the second stage of shaping the vessel. A red slip prepared by mixing with water powdered red ochre obtained from certain river beds, is applied whilst being turned on the wheel at the end of the second stage. A human hair brush is used in the application of the red slip. A second coating is applied ten minutes after the first. After half an hour the whole surface is polished with a large shell (cowry) whilst the vessel is in motion. Any form of decoration may be carried out by means of the finger nails or pen-knife. Simple linear or geometric and floral decorations are in great favour. As before the vessel is dried in the sun and burnt. Finally white dry clay is rubbed with a cloth duster leaving an encrustation which lasts but a short time.

The toys may be classed under two groups on the basis of the material either clay or cloth used in their manufacture. The art of making pottery figures to be used as toys may have been an ancient tradition of reasonable antiquity if we are to accept the terra-cotta figurines unearthed at Talagaswewa[1] and Hettipola[2] as also belonging to the same class.

1. N.-C. P.—*See* J. Sc. Vol. I, Pt. 1. p. 10.
2. In N.-W. P.

It has failed to be inherited in direct succession. Perhaps the art disappeared. What we find today at Kelaniya and other centres of pottery making is the infusion of a new tradition into an ancient art as a result of European contacts. Crúde figures of animals and birds, some real and others mythical are hand made and painted in bright colours in fantastic shapes out of all conformity with anatomical exactness or natural colouring. The children take delight in such fanciful objects of folk-art. As embodying the native tradition and expressing the imaginative fancy these toys are of great interest. Among the most popular toys are dogs, horses, elephants, bulls, deer, peacocks, parrots, cocks, doves, rhinos and unicorns. Natural objects and fruits are also made., These toys are so made as to be used as tills for saving coin money. Morover, it has become a common custom for visitors and pilgrims to take home some of these toys as souvenirs of their visit to the holy places and fairs where a variety of such objects are exhibited for sale.

The other class of objects are the dolls made of cloth and paper. The Sinhalese call them *bonikko.*[1] The general make, style of dress and features betray European origin. Kelaniya, Buthgama, Bentota and other costal towns still make these dolls. At these places the Portuguese contacts may have been wholesome, being, perhaps, areas of their domicile. And Sinhalese women learnt the art by imitation or for pleasing the foreign masters who may have been served as mistresses by them.

Rope Making

Coir and rope making are industries carried out by a section of the population chiefly living along the coastal areas and lagoons. These belong mostly to the Halagama community. The raw material used is coconut husk treated in different stages as follows :—

The first stage is soaking[2] the husk. Fresh green husks of coconuts are deposited in a large pit of water a large quantity being pressed down to fill the pit. A layer of cadjan covers the husks, weighed down by large stumps of coconut trunks. The deposit remains for four to six months until the emanation of a repulsive smell. This is the time for beating.

The secònd stage is beating the husks. Women do the beating in small lots by placing each husk on a coconut stump (*kohu kanda*) and beating out with a stick made of kitul palm. This releases the

1. A corrupted form of the Portuguese word *boneca* meaning baby or doll.
2. *Pol Leli Idima.*

coir dust from the fibre enabling the stripping of the outer skin. When the dust falls off completely the fibre is carded with the fingers and allowed to dry for two or three days in the sun.

The third stage is to heap the fibre together pressed down by means of a weight. The women now sit by the heap and dexterously wind up the fibre into threads from the mass. This process is known as (*pilla gahanawa* or *adinawa*) threading. In the same operation of threading are made the strings by winding two threads between the palms of the hand or rolled singly on the thighs. The string is made into lengths and sold in skeins. Three grades of rope are recognised according to the thickness viz:- *lanu*, *ran* and *kamba*.

Mining

Ceylon was well-known in the ancient world as the land of gems and pearls. Travellers and traders spread the fame throughout the world. The Arabs monopolised the ancient trade of the island. The precious stones are found in the south-west of the island in the Province of Sabaragamuwa and Southern Province. Ratnapura is the centre of the gem-trade, the name signifying the city of gems. The pearls come from the sea around Mannar. All mining whether for gems, plumbago or other minerals require permits issued by Government.

The gems are present in gravel beds underlying the alluvial deposits in the basins of rivers at a depth varying from fifteen to thirty feet. Mining for precious stones is an adventurous business dependant on a deal of luck. Many instances of total loss of wealth or total enrichment through blind prospecting are well known. But the lure of wealth still drives many in its search. The easiest method of obtaining gems is collecting river gravels and sorting them out by hand or winnow. Many a villager living in gemming areas try this method not without some success. The more intensive process involves sinking large pits by mechanical means. The gem-bearing levels are known to experienced men. On reaching this stratum caution has to be exercised in examining the debris as well as preventing loss by stealth.

A timber structure is erected at the mouth of the pit. A pulley or two are attached to the top. The water is baled out by means of buckets. Few men descend into the pit and dig into the gemmiferous stratum (*illama*). The debris from this level is carefully collected and sent up to the surface. When the gem-bearing gravels are cleared the pit is abandoned. A new pit is sunk in the vicinity. The gems are collected in their natural state and sold at the spot or in the bazaar.

The cutting is done by experts who are Sinhalese or Muslims. The Sinhalese of Galle possess a good knowledge of this art. In ancient Ceylon certain lands were set apart by Sinhalese kings as gem reserves for the royal household. These certainly must have been the best known at that time.

Graphite, popularly known as plumbago, is found in a wide area scattered throughout the island. The following are the most popular sites where mining is carried out even at the present day :— Bogala, Kahatagaha, Ragedera, Meegahatenna, Maddegama, Wediwatte, Hewessa, Suduwelipota and Ampegama.

In the early days mining was a risky business involving many hazards to human lives. The miners went down a narrow pit with oil lamps and then excavated the plumbago in horizontal tunnels. Mechanical aids to facilitate excavation or protect lives were few. And the woeful story of a miner's sad lot may be gathered by a study of their songs preserved in the folk lore.

A rope and barrel revolving around a heavy log of wood placed over the mouth of the pit served as a means of transport up and down the pit. The log was turned by many hands.

PEARL FISHERIES

Ceylon has been well-known for its pearls and the trade was mainly in the hands of Moors. The South Indian Tamils worked for hire as divers. The Government took control of the pearl banks and sold the rights of exploiting the fisheries to private persons. In recent years the pearl oysters seem to avoid these banks owing to various factors, and a source of wealth has been denied to Government. The pearl banks which have been located around the shallow waters of Mannar have not yielded any pearl oysters for many years past. The last inspection conducted by the Department of Fisheries was in 1940. The results were negative. The pearl oyster appears to migrate and there is no prospect of another fishery for some years to come as the present breed will take many years to reach maturity.

Spinning and Weaving

The Kuveni legend[1] mentions the knowledge and practice of spinning in early Ceylon. The art is still practised in a very crude form by the Kinnaras[2] who do not weave cloth but make mats. These are made by hand on a loom that is fixed on the ground. It is a very simple

1. See *Mahawamsa.*
2. Known as clever weavers of Dumbara mats.

mechanical aid and may be the forerunner of the later Sinhalese looms where the operator sits in a pit.

The old looms have been replaced by modern machinery but one may still come across an ancient Sinhalese loom in out of the way parts of the island.

Sinhalese cloth often consists of pretty patterns useful as canopies or ceiling covers but as an article of ordinary wear it was never produced in sufficiency. The art was known and the patterns were very valuable. These were sometimes painted or printed.

BASKET AND REED WORK

The people may have given up wearing bark cloth in very ancient times although some of the jungle folk continued to use bark cloth. Weaving was known in early Ceylon although bark-cloth is still used by the Veddas not so much for clothing as for other vessels. Rope making is a modern craft practised by a certain caste living near coconut plantations. But the use of certain knots and methods of fastening indicate the existence of other material for this purpose. In the remote rural villages the use of reeds, creepers, leaves, hemp and the inner bark of trees is still common for tying and fastening wood, cattle, boats, etc. The weaving of mats, baskets and cloth is so similar in process to each other as to betray the development of one from the other.

A variety of creepers[1] running on the ground as well as climbing trees are known, some of which are used in tying up fire wood by the peasant women. These same creepers are used in tying up the wood and reed frame work in the wattle and daub houses.

Thicker but stronger creepers[2] are employed in constructing fences around fields and chenas as well as in the large elephant stockades.. These are used for tethering cattle specially buffaloes and even elephants. The *kabarossa* variety is also made into two large rings for fastening the rope of large swings during the Sinhalese New Year Festival.

Reed,[3] bamboo and cane grow luxuriantly in the Ceylon jungles. These three varieties are put to an innumerable number of uses, the reed being mostly restricted to the kitchen,[4] the cane for domestic use,[5] and bamboo[6] for all outside work.

1. *Maduwel, Potawel, Kabarossa.*
2. *Banwel, Kabarossa,*
3. *Bata, Una, We.*
4. Racks, strainers, winnowing fans, measures, boxes, tats, pens, Wesak lamps.
5. Furniture, boxes, baskets, mats, tats.
6 Fencing, scaffolding, ladders, sheds.

The common reed is the *bata* out of which the Sinhalese have for long made a large number of articles, it being the most easily obtainable and workable. Boxes for storing wearing apparel as well as carrying sweets on visits were made out of reed. Cane is difficult to gather and expensive but more pliable, durable and of pleasing appearance. Hence its popularity as a material for domestic furniture.

Water reeds (*pan*) have helped to make many useful articles such as mats, hats, bags both for domestic and agricultural use. These have been known for long. The mats are used for sleeping at night and covering the threshing floor, and bags for collecting grain. The gunny bags are modern articles. Other shallow vessels are also made with reeds. Coconut fronds boiled and dried in the sun can be substituted for reed but these do not last.

All objects made of reed are hand-woven except the Dumbara mats made on a primitive loom. The articles in agricultural use are plain whilst those in domestic use consist of a variety of beautifully coloured pleasing geometrical patterns. The reeds are graded according to the texture of the material. And many a superstition has grown around each species. Every housewife devotes her leisure to weaving reed objects as that is the certain way of ensuring the regular supply. Many patterns of indigenous and foreign origin are known.

The superior species of water reed have a large demand since a new industry of making beautiful multicoloured boxes, bags and head-gear has been started. The tender leaves of the wild variety of date palm (*indi*) is the specific material employed in this new industry. It is an encouragement for the old art of weaving and the ready market is an inducement for good progress of local arts and crafts.

The colours still used for dyeing the reeds and painting objects have been prepared from local vegetable material. Many of the ancient dyes and processes are being replaced by imported foreign stuff. Nevertheless the following colours are still used :—

Patangi for red : The chips of wood from this tree are boiled with the material until the colour is absorbed.

Kaha for yellow : also chips of fresh jak wood. The material to be dyed is boiled with a sufficient quantity of either material.

Nil for blue : natural blue is rare so the imported dye is used.

Pachcha for green : natural minerals were used but now the imported dye is used.

Kalu for black : seldom used except in painting.

XIV

FISHING AND HUNTING

FISHING AND hunting are two of the most ancient methods of food supply which are still practised by the poor as a mode of eking out a living and by the rich as a sport. The vast stretch of jungle still affords good hunting, there being a variety of animal and bird life. The modern weapons also have facilitated the procuring of game. The many streams and inland waters do not teem with fish. Fishing in inland waters as an economic undertaking finds little encouragement.

In hunting some of the primitive methods are employed by those who possess no firearms. Dogs are used. Killing an animal by chasing and overpowering it or by striking with a club or stone is still common. Fire is employed either to choke an animal or force it out of its lair. The Veddas and Gypsies resort to such means for getting at game. They also seek mechanical aids like traps, pits, snares. One predisposing condition of such a form of the chase is an intimate knowledge of the life and habits of the animals. The jungle folk possess such a knowledge. One very primitive form of the trap is the one called *habake*[1] employed by the Veddas even today. This is a contrivance whereby a large pile of stones fall on the animal and disable or kill it. Even large animals like sambhur, deer, elk are killed in this manner. There are a number of spring traps for noosing small sized animals and even birds. Their action is automatic and depends on the animal itself unwittingly releasing the spring by a mere touch.

The wooden stockade is a development of the ancient method of cornering animals by driving them into a pre-selected area. This is the method employed for catching wild elephants and buffaloes. It is an elaboration of an ancient method still practised in other parts of the world. Camouflaged pits with or without wooden spikes at the bottom have been employed not only in trapping small game but even elephants. Birdlime or other preparation of sticky material is used to catch birds

1. A very crude devise whereby large slabs of rock are so arranged into a sloping cave like an overhanging roof as to fall on the prey that comes to be under it. The weight is so heavy as to crush even a strong sambhur.

and small animals. Poison has been seldom employed.

Other mechanical contrivances[1] helping the chase have been the club, throwing stick, blow pipe, stone sling, pellet bow and the bow and arrows.[2] Today all these methods are obsolete. But there is strong evidence of their one time use since some of these objects are used by children as toys or in sport or to scare away birds and beasts.

No one, not even a Vedda, now depends on these methods solely for his food supply. The food supply is ensured in other ways and is only supplemented by such methods. Even the bow and arrow which were at one time found to be an efficient weapon of the chase, have become in the hands of the wildest Vedda only a passport to his racial identity. The gun has replaced all other lethal weapons. The dogs accompany the hunters more as companions than anything else.

The old methods have disappeared or are fast disappearing. The gun has captured the imagination by proving its effectiveness. The love to possess firearms has become irresistible. Even the Vedda living in the remotest jungle of Ceylon possesses a gun which alone, in a world of speed and competition, would ensure survival.

Fishing may be dealt with under three categories, inland, shore, and deep sea. As is only natural, the methods employed in inland fishing must necessarily have been the oldest. The survivals of such ancient methods may also be expected in inland areas.

The simplest is the scooping method by means of a basket. The fisher can operate from the edge of the bank or if the water course is shallow by wading in it. The small fish so caught may be stored in a small bag tied around the waist or kept in the mouth.[3] Portions of a shallow stream, lake, canal or other water course may be dammed and drained by bailing the water when the fish can be easily caught with the hands. This method is proverbial as destructive and can be only exploited in the case of small shallow patches in dry weather. Sometimes all the water is not baled out. When a sufficient amount to enable wading is emptied the area is beaten out into a muddy pool by men or buffaloes. The fresh-water fish so blinded by the mud come up to the surface and float on top. During this period a sufficient amount is killed with a stick or caught by basket or hands.

Poison is seldom used in inland fishing. But the Veddas use certain leaves and roots to poison fish in small pools. The poison is allowed to

1. Ludovici, Leopold—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 5, 1870–71, p. 41—appliances for discharging.
2. Neville, H.—*The Taprobanian*, Vol. III—Bow of Wannias.
3. As a result of swallowing such fish cases of death are on record.

mix with water and stupefy the fish. Then these are caught with the hands. Dynamite is also used sometimes, the fish being allowed to crowd together by throwing out food and then dynamited.

A number of wicker work contrivances[1] are known and used where the principle underlying is that the fish having got inside find no way of getting out. Artificial devices like food and burning oil lamps are used for attracting the fish to these traps. Such traps are set up in mid stream of rivers or lagoons. The traps are searched early morning and the fish collected.

During the rains and the appearance of fresh water certain species of fish come out into the shallow waters. These could then be killed easily at nights with a lighted torch and knife.

A variety of throwing nets[2] manipulated by one or more men help to catch fish by wading in the water and casting the net intermittently in favourable parts of the river, lagoon or sea. In this case the fisher has to shift his position constantly. More elaborate series of nets are in use for trapping crabs and prawns. These are set up and not thrown. Large nets are also thrown from boats in rivers. The pulling in such cases is also done in the water. The rod and line method finds an island wide distribution since it could be employed under any circumstance in places deep and dangerous where the other methods cannot be resorted to. Fishing with the line may be done from the bank of a stream or from a sailing vessel on the river and sea. The rod consists of a well-grown branch of the kitul-palm. The line is woven thread discoloured and waxed. The hook is locally made or imported. The baits used are earthworms, bits of prawns, red-ant eggs or live fish. Sometimes the line [3] only is used. Specially in the case of big fish the line is tied to a tree or stone if on land and to the boat if at sea. A development of the line and hook is utilised for trapping crocodiles. A large mass of flesh is affixed to a large hook having three or four barbs and the line is tied to a tree. A dog is tied near by to attract the crocodile by its barking. When the bait is swallowed the crocodile is dragged ashore and is clubbed to death by a large crowd of people. Fishing with rod and line and casting nets is carried out along the shallow waters of the shores of the island. These ventures are limited to one or at most to a small group of persons. But shore fishing as a most profitable business of a communal nature is a seasonal activity where large nets of various sizes and built-up boats come into operation.

1. *Kemina, Kotuwa, Ja-Kotu.*
2. *Baru Dela and At Dela.*
3. *Yotha..*

This type of fishing can be conducted on the calm seas when the monsoon winds are absent.

When a shoal of fish has been sighted from the shore or the top of a coconut tree the leader hurriedly puts out to sea carrying the rope nets in the large built up boat which is rowed with oars by ten to twenty persons. The net is cast as the boat proceeds in a semi-circular movement. The whole idea is to encircle the fish quickly. When the furthest point of the semi-circle is reached and this is not more than two or three miles the small meshed net (*madiya*) is tied and the boat makes for the shore. Then the two sides of the net are pulled by crowds of people, men women and children. Even strangers give a helping hand in hauling the nets. Shouting, hooting and screaming prevail throughout the operation, the labour being lightened by songs[1] that are particularly meant to keep time. Payment is in kind on a share basis even the outsiders getting a share of fish for their assistance. Hauling the ropes continues until the mouth of the net is close to the shore. The net is fastened as soon as possible. The catch is dragged ashore and divided among the shareholders of the fishing gear or is auctioned. Sometimes the catch is disappointing. At other times the catch is so massive as to burst the nets.

Some fishers engage in fishing throughout the whole year in certain familiar areas far out at sea. These people dare the worst weather and go out daily, despite storms, rains, and heavy seas. This type of fishing is restricted to certain villages along the coast. The sea-going men are brave, rugged in appearance and fully sun burnt. Some of them go as far as ten or fifteen miles out of sight of land. The vessel used is the ancient type of single out rigger canoe and rarely the *kattumaran*. About three to four persons man these boats and the hooks and lines and baskets and food are carried in the body of the canoe. The journey commences at break of dawn or even earlier, the majority returning by noon in time to market the fish. The boats continue coming back as late as sunset. Hills and other prominent land marks help the fishermen to steer homewards. They carry no maps or compass.

The benighted fishermen either fish throughout the night or help themselves by the torch light flares raised by the home folk in locating the land. On a successful outing the catch is considerable and much money is realised by the sale of fish. But the indebtedness of the fishermen is proverbial and he finds himself a pauper the next day after the catch having settled the obligations to the church, the money lender or the middlemen.

1. Only a few of this class of song are preserved. Some may be heard still along the coast.

XV

TRANSPORT

HUMAN TRANSPORT is the oldest mode of carrying loads from one place to another. Long before animals acted as beasts of burden or draught animals were tied to mechanical contrivances men and women acted as carriers. Perhaps the nature of the country offered no other possibility. But man was able to overcome all difficulties to force a way through jungle paths and up the precipitous steep slopes of hills. Man's early wandering life forced him to shift from place to place carrying with him his domestic utensils, wealth and movable property. The baggage included infants whom most probably the women carried.

Men carry loads on the head, shoulder, back or the waist. Both men and women carry on the head. The shoulder is preferred by men whilst the waist appeals to women. Carrying a child seated with its legs on either side of the waist or a water pot balanced by the hand at the waist is a very common sight in the village.

Numerous aids[1] to carrying are in use such as wicker-work baskets, bags, sacks, cloth or embroidered cases. The load is placed within and carried by the person. Sometimes the load is tied to a carrying pole on one side or both and balanced over the shoulder. Occasion demands the carrying of a heavy load by suspending it on the middle of a pole whose two ends are carried over the shoulder of two men. The palanquin or the sedan chair is constructed on this principle as there is room for more men to share the load. Loads are also dragged on by tying a rope or chain. Timber is transported in this manner.

An average Sinhalese peasant can carry on his head or shoulder one bag of paddy with ease and that is about sixty to seventy five pounds. There are carrier specialists who are professional palanquin bearers. There are other carriers who are prepared to transport in person heavier loads. The ill-starved dry zone carriers who appear scarcely able to carry themselves actually carry heavy loads for long distances lasting the whole day. Some of them cover as much as twenty miles over difficult paths through thick jungle under a burning sun for a sum of one-rupee.

1. *Kooda, petti, malu, goni, kotta-ura, kokkanapai,* etc.

Among the animals employed as beasts of burden the bull is the commonest since it is not only a pack animal but also a draught animal. It is made to carry loads in teams. Such a team of oxen transporting goods is known as a *tavalam*. This mode of transport was generally known all over the island but at the present day is restricted to the upland area. The loads are hung across the back bone to rest on either side of the belly. Straps help to keep the load in position. Tinkling metal bells and wooden cattle gongs are tied around the neck of these pack animals. It may be a contrivance to urge the pack on as well as to drive away any wild animals lying hidden on the way. Each pack consists of a large number of animals which follow a leader going ahead. Considering the nature of the land and the loads the animals have to carry their power of endurance seems amazing. The pack is made up of both sexes and their road sense is good. These haggard cattle of the jungle have done good work and deserve to be remembered at least in our folk lore.

The elephant as a draught animal could not have been conceivable had it not been seen in use today. The ancient men who dared the training of elephants to do man's heavy labour deserve credit since the ferocity, immensity and wild nature of the animal would have terrified even the strongest of men. It is only in the Indian zone that the elephant is so tamed and trained. Probably it was first trained in India. Elephants, in fact, formed one limb of the ancient Indian army. They are lordly beasts of majestic bearing when fully caparisoned and play a part in ceremonial processions both of a religious and social nature. The pioneer road makers and jungle chasers of the island found the elephant of immense use even as today it is very useful when dealing with heavy loads in difficult country and for uprooting trees, transporting timber and lifting rocks. It can even be made to pull a heavy roller or push a motor car. There are many interesting stories about elephants.[1]

The horse[2] is not indigenous to Ceylon but it has been introduced by the Indians. The Sinhalese cultivated no special aptitude for adapting it to any special use until very recent times. The horse coach and trap are European introductions which have now gone out of use. But at one time the possession of a horse and trap denoted high social standing and wealth. Horses are used on estates for riding. And a few rich indulge in riding them. The horse has attracted attention as a racer and horse

1. It is supposed to have a good memory, keen sense and extraordinary intelligence. It is considered very lucky to walk under its belly.

2. Horses were bred by an Irishman in the Island of Delft.

ELEPHANT AT WORK





BULLOCK CART

racing is very popular but at the same time is responsible for the ruin of many gamblers. Mules are also kept in some estates. The donkey[1] is owned by the gypsies whose only mode of transport is this animal. They form their wealth since on them depend their movements from one place to another. These animals are able to carry a good load. On breaking up camp the gypsies pack up everything including pots and pans, huts, snake bags, etc., on the back of their donkeys, the two ends hanging on either side of the back-bone. A team of donkeys carrying such a load is a peculiar sight.

There are two groups of wheeled vehicles, one mechanical and the other motor. The cart[2] is an ancient vehicle. Its origin is lost in antiquity. The majority of carts are drawn by oxen. Also there are smaller carts pushed or pulled by men. The rickshaw has also found a permanent home owing to the prevalence of cheap human labour. Only a few Sinhalese pull rickshaws. The majority of the pullers are South Indian immigrants. The wheel barrow may also be mentioned here. Only in certain districts the buffalo is tied to carts but the ox is the age old draught animal.

All carts are used for transporting men and material but some are restricted to goods transport owing to their slow speed. There is a special travelling cart which has practically gone out of use. The bullock carts are intended to carry heavy loads over great distances lasting several days. The men carry with them the cooking utensils and provisions to last the journey. When long journeys are undertaken the carters travel in groups, taking shelter at regular halting places[3] both for safety and for replenishing stocks, etc. Most of the travelling is done at night. It is then that they sing ancient folk songs. In spite of the popularity of lorry and rail transport the carts are still being patronised for transport of non-perishable goods because of their convenience and comparative cheapness.

Since the introduction of faster and more modern means of locomotion travelling has come within easy reach of the population. The railway came in first and was followed by motor vehicles—the car, 'bus and lorry. The bus has penetrated to the remotest villages of the island, thus influencing the customs, health and life of the community considerably. The variety of life is being toned down to one pattern and

1. Strangely enough there is a popular belief that the braying of the donkeys helps to destroy black-betels that destroy the coconut trees.

2. Race cart, three quarter cart, buggy cart, travel cart, half-bullock cart, bullock cart.

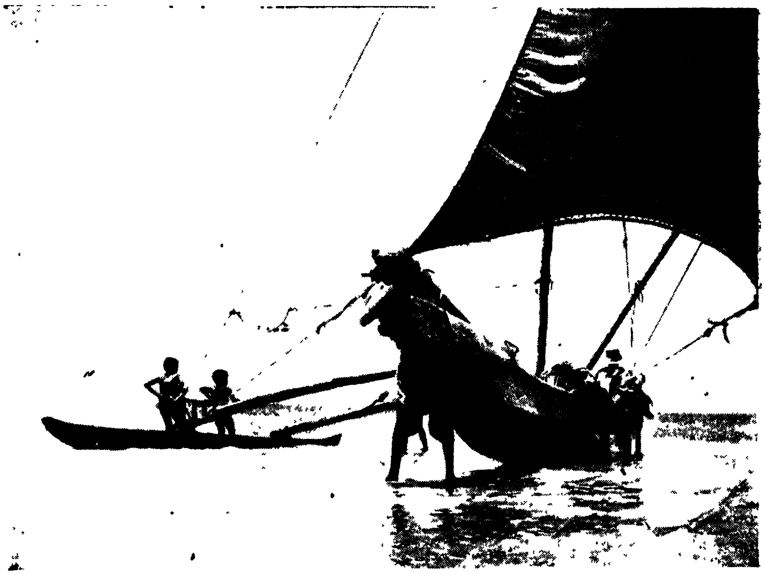
3. *Gala* : kraal at which the carters pay a small fee and find shelter and protection for themselves, their animals and loads.

the ancient culture is being transformed to one single copy. Motor cars are owned by the wealthy. Bus travel is preferred to the train and lorry transport to the rail owing to their cheapness and easy accessibility. The competition between the privately owned motor vehicles and the Government owned railway has been so keen as to adversely affect the Government finances that a system of co-ordinating rail, bus and lorry transport has had to be introduced by Government. Its success remains to be seen.

A single log is still used as a mode of water transport. One is able to cross streams or rivers by holding on to it or sitting on it. This method is safer than swimming without any support. The passage is facilitated when the movement is down stream. A single log does not afford the same degree of safety as a forked log. And actual cases of men transporting themselves on a forked log by paddling with the hands have been observed by the writer. The next stage of evolution is the raft-constructed by tying together two ro more logs to form a platform. This is the commonest method of transporting timber. Rafts are commonly made of bamboo or other light woods. If the timber is heavy the weight could be supported by adding a lighter material like bamboo. Children make rafts by tying together plantain stems. A timber raft is a fairly stable means of transport. A large number of logs are fastened together with bamboo into a sort of platform. This is usually punted down stream by two or more men standing at each end. Sometimes a meal may be cooked on a raft. One still sees rafts of timber floating down the Kelani and other principal rivers.

An improvement of the raft is the *teppam* where the logs are shorter and the ends shaped to a point. Five large logs of wood are firmly fastened with necessary provision in the central log to fix up a mast and sail. The sails help the men specially when casting nets. A paddle is also used when required. The *teppam* is mainly used in the north and north-western shores. These can travel remarkable distances. Although a very primitive sea-craft in appearance, it has a seaworthiness that could safely stand the stormiest seas. A *teppam* with full sails out at sea at eventide is a grand sight.

Very similar to the *teppam* and worked on very much the same principle is the *kattumaran*. Five or more logs are tied together into a sort of raft with an even convex surface. Sails could be used if necessary. It is cruder and larger than a *teppam*. It is used along the north-western coast but is purely an Indian vessel seasonally employed for fishing in Ceylon by South Indians who actually travel on them.



OUTRIGGER CANOE

The single canoe is a hollowed log capable of supporting three or four persons. Sometimes the gunwale is raised by sewing a plank to the log so as to prevent any water filling in. The boat is paddled by means of a short oar held in the hand. The oarsman sits at the back or middle looking in the direction of the destination with his legs cramped inside or thrown out on to one side. The canoe is a very inexpensive simple craft that could be propelled by even a young girl and is chiefly used in inland waters like rivers and lagoons.

The double canoe is constructed by joining together two single canoes placed at a distance of three feet or so. A planked platform is set up for sitting and placing loads. The buoyancy and stability are increased by this method. Nevertheless, general utility has been sacrificed owing to the fact that it cannot be used on narrow streams and canals. The vessel is propelled by means of oars. One or more men seated on either canoe can row it at a fairly good speed with a load of ten or more persons. Consequently the double canoe is a useful mode of transport used on the rivers, lakes and lagoons. A further development of the double canoes leads to the ferry boat. The various improvements have enabled the transport of heavy loads at the loss of speed. The vessel is propelled by punting with a long pole. These ferry boats transport carts, motor vehicles, men and other loads. When the rivers are swoollen these ferries become very unwieldly owing to strong currents. But in a land of many streams and few bridges the ferry boats help considerably the passage of traffic and serve as bridges.

The outrigger canoe[1] is constructed with the base of a single canoe the gunwale of which is strongly raised with planks in order to keep out the water from the waves. A log pointed at either end is firmly attached to the canoe by means of three curved booms. This considerably adds to its buoyancy and stability thus preventing the boat from capsizing even during the worst gale. One or two sails are hoisted from the mast erected by pivoting a bamboo to the socket on the canoe. The canoe can be rowed or driven with sails. A rudder is also attached. The tackle and other gear could all be stored. Three to five persons can travel in it with a great deal of discomfort. The art of sailing and navigation is learnt by experience. The sailors carry no charts, maps or compasses but they are aware of reefs and danger spots. The familiar land marks guide them back to shore. The outrigger is essentially a fishing craft which has proved its seaworthiness by the

1. The Sinhalese word is *Oruwa* whilst the Polynesian word is *Oru*. This boat is often miscalled the *Kattamaran*. The outrigger may have been introduced from the Indonesian group of islands along with other cultural traits during very ancient times.

test of time. It is chiefly found in the south and west coast of Ceylon. All throughout the year the Sinhalese engage in deep-sea fishing in these simple craft which can stand up to the worst weather. Of course, the boats do capsize but that very rarely happens.

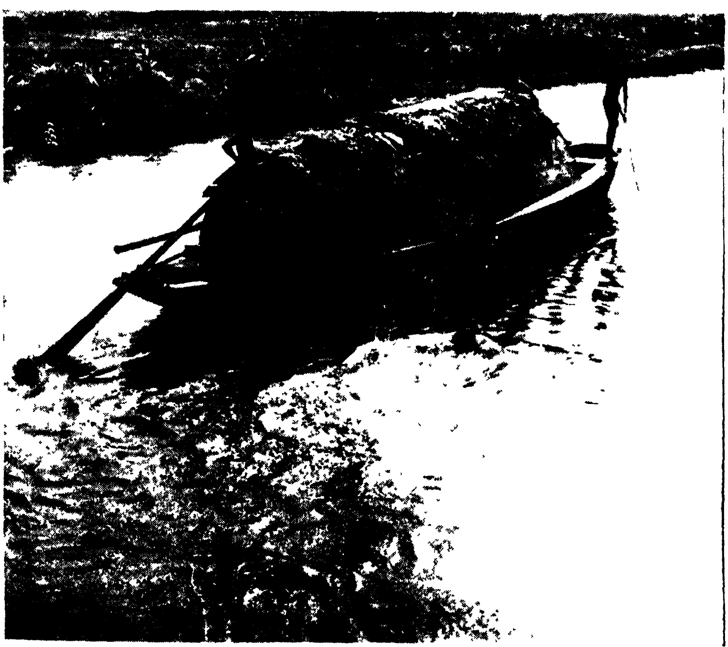
The built-up boat popularly called the padda-boat (*Paaruwa*) is a comparatively large vessel involving many months' labour in its construction. The basic principle is that of the canoe. The modifications have aimed at obtaining more accommodation, security and loading capacity. Speed has again been sacrificed. On the wider and large canoe base are built up the raised gunwale, the bow and stern rising above six feet. Slabs of wood are cleverly sewn together with string and the openings glued. A cadjan roof is set up as protection against sun and rain. It is able to carry forty to fifty persons but at a low speed. The boat could be rowed with oars and also sailed. The padda-boat is mainly used for throwing the large nets in shore-fishing and inland water transport on the rivers, canals and lagoons. Much of the transport of Ceylon produce like tea, rubber, copra and plumbago and timber was carried out by means of these large boats. A system of canals connecting the rivers provided accessibility to the city of Colombo from where the produce was exported. The river or canal journeys last for days and nights. Cooking utensils and provisions are carried and the food is cooked on the hearth found on board. There are also favourite stopping places on the way. There are a number of songs sung by the boatmen during their voyages up and down the water ways. There are interesting records of their life preserving descriptions of incidents, the beauty of landscape and the hardness of their lot. That life has changed, and the boat itself, which was such a beautiful sight when coursing with full sails unfurled, is a rare sight.

The simplest way of bridging the gulf across a stream or land is by placing a single log.[1] Such bridges are commonly found all over the villages. The narrow girth of the log makes the passage somewhat unsteady specially when the gap is wide and deep. In such cases two or more logs are added to widen the path. The logs consist of trunks of coconut trees and other trees. Further safety is ensured by providing a hand railing of creepers, rope, or wood. Often these bridges are carried away by the rain water.

Suspension bridges made of strong creepers for getting across village streams still survive. The platform is constructed by means of planks

1. Known as an *Edanda*.

PADDA BOAT



or bamboo strips. Two railings of creepers form a sort of support both to the bridge as well as to the passers by. One rarely sees a bridge of this type now.

Built up bridges for the transport of vehicles and men have been known to have been constructed of stone and wood. Though the wooden ones have disappeared some of the ancient stone bridges have survived to this day. If the gap is narrow a bridge could be made by laying strong timber across to a sufficient width and then filling up the surface with stones and rubble. Such bridges are strong while they last but their durability is short. When the gap to be spanned is wider piles are driven either on the dry land or in the bed if in a river. The structure is set up on the piles. The bridge lasted as a result of sheer sturdiness and not owing to the employment of mechanical support. Bridges built on these ancient methods are disappearing. Wherever these are found it will be in unimportant villages. Wherever possible stone, concrete and steel bridges have replaced a large number of important bridges some of which are fine examples of engineering skill.

XVI

BELIEFS

TABOO[1] [*kili*] is applied in Sinhalese society to mean forbidden, not allowed, polluted, unclean and hence to be segregated and avoided. In all its applications its usage implies a magico-social sanction against the object or person that is tabooed in so far as it has to be avoided by presence or touch. Even the atmosphere seems to be tainted. The sanction is strictly applied through fear for the individual family or society. " Kili " signifies that even casual contact with the "kilied" person or thing and even one's presence in such a dangerous atmosphere is fraught with grave danger of an inexplicable nature whose harmful effect comes automatically on the transgressor. Such things, persons or the atmosphere are supposed to be charged, polluted and defiled during the actual period of defilement. This mystic evil influence may only be averted by a careful ceremonial approach. The actual period of danger is commonly agreed upon by custom and depends on the nature of the case. During such a specified period of time the taboo is in force. The termination of the tabooed period and the resumption of normal relations followed a definite performance of a certain ritual by means of which any possible lurking danger may be averted. The taboo may be enforced on a society, person or thing, and such taboos are mostly connected with or arise from women since their potentiality to defile follows easily as a result of the physiological condition of woman. There are other natural phenomena like sickness, death and birth which induce a state of *kili*.

There is good reason to suppose that uncleanliness, pollution infection and fear are the rudimentary factors predisposing to the mental state towards *kili*. The observance of *kili* in an average household would set out the implications of this phenomenon. The best starting point of the enquiry would be here.

Many a taboo centres around the idea of blood. Consequently, the woman has come in for a greater share of their avoidance owing to her

The Sinhalese word is *kili i.e.*, to be defiled, polluted, tainted. This should not be mixed with evil or unlucky. *Asubha i.e.*, signs that should also be avoided.

temporary physical indisposition. But not all the taboos originate from this source. The field is wide and many other known and unknown causes have helped to influence the idea. The Sinhalese observe a certain continence in their marital relations. Certain days and periods are avoided as unclean by custom, necessitating the avoidance of sexual intercourse during menstruation and the last stages of pregnancy. The Buddhists have added to this list the days of the four quarters of the moon. During certain periods of a woman's life she is expected to abstain from certain foods and avoid certain places so that she may not be affected by the evil influences of spirits. These taboos are enforced as it is easy for a woman in such a state of health to be easily affected.

There are two special *kilis* connected with women. One is connected with menstruation[1] and the other with birth.[2] Both instances are associated with blood and as such the person as well as the others must be carefully looked after since the greatest dangers could befall during this state. The supposed period of defilement lasts so long as the out-flow of blood lasts. The violation of the taboo at this period is bound to entail disastrous consequences. The woman has to be protected and the best way is to isolate the patient with guarded attendance. The patient is not allowed to come out. No mixing up with even the other members of the same family is permitted save for aged women, an aunt or the mother. After a ceremonial ablution the patient resumes her normal position in the family with some slight restrictions which are also removed after three months.

The strangest taboos are practised during puberty and menstruation. The girl has to be carefully protected and the inmates as well as visitors kept aloof. No one is permitted to see the girl nor is the girl allowed to see or converse with anyone. Carefully confined to a room or hidden behind the door she has to remain alone for some time watched, protected, and nursed by her mother, grand-mother or an elderly relative. This has to continue for a week or so. In some parts of the island and specially among the Rodiyas and Veddas the menstruating woman is isolated in a temporary hut built only a few yards distant from the regular dwelling.

The first menstruation is the most important change in the life of a girl as it involves a physical change on account of which her position in the family and society entails responsibility. She has become a woman—a potential mother. The occasion needs to be impressed and usually

1. *Magul Killa.*
2. *Wedum Killa.*

after the first menstruation a large number of purificatory ceremonies have to be performed. In the set ritual the washerwoman plays an important part. She is thereby entitled to a good fee and the soiled clothing. Here again the Sinhalese betray their fear for blood. No one dare touch this mysterious element except the low-caste washerwoman. The time of the bath is fixed by the astrologer who fixes an opportune moment and mentions the type of marriage she is likely to contract. The water is poured with a fresh pot in the early hours of the morning so that no unworthy person may set eyes on her. The pot is broken at the end of the ablutions. Having anointed her body and put on fresh clothing and new ornaments she steps out of her seclusion. The first act is to salute her elders by an act of prostrate worship. The elders and friends give her presents. There is a feast and much merriment at which the playing of the *rabana* is a never-failing source of amusement to the inmates and a nuisance to the whole neighbourhood.

The birth of a child is another occasion for inducing a state of *kili* in the abode of the patient. The patient is isolated, but the taboo is not so rigidly enforced as in the previous case although the potency of danger is not less. The woman remains indoors for about ten to fourteen days. An auspicious day is chosen for coming out before which she must be bathed with warm water. A decoction of leaves[1] is applied on her body whilst the leaves are used for rubbing the body. In theory the duration of the taboo is three months.

Diseases, particularly those of an infectious or contagious nature such as plagues and epidemics are another source of possible danger that are tabooed. Only the diseases of the Mothers,[2] namely, chicken-pox, small-pox, etc., are included in this class. It is *kili* to visit patients or the village[3] where such patients reside. This application of the taboo embodies the germ of the present day conception of segregating the contacts. The primitive man's enforcement of health regulations for the good of the community may have given birth to the principle of *kili*. In its observance the fear towards violation is greater than any legal order since the application is bilateral and the evil results may come on both parties.

In so far as the principle of *kili* presents an unknown source of danger it also suggests a possible explanation for failure in any undertaking, aggravation of an illness and death. It even affords consolation in

1. The leaves used are *Kohomba*, *Tora*, *Adatoda*, Turmeric, etc.

2. The mothers referred to are Pattini and the seven mothers. These must be propitiated by acts of sport such as *An-Edima Pol-keli*, *Peli-yama* and *Devol madu netima*.

3. *Gode leda thiyanawa*—there is illness in the village.

death. The Sinhalese consider death as the culmination of the human worldly cycle. It is the final crisis of life and is itself a potent source of *kili* lasting three months.

Kili mostly of a sexual nature may befall social activities. On account of such a belief the presence of virgins[1] is deemed essential in the performance of benedictary rites in order to ensure complete success. In rituals of a magico-social bearing association with women is forbidden lest the officiants be polluted by presence, touch or act. The performer of *bali* (*bali edura*). witch-doctor (*kattadiya*) kapurala or ascetic hopes to acquire and command all inherent power by purity. Hence the pre-requisite for all ceremonial acts is cleansing by water, abstention from fish and meat and the investment of clean clothes and anointment of unguents. Sexual intercourse must be avoided under any condition.

In the economic sphere and specially in agricultural pursuits *kili* is strictly observed during all stages. Special precautions are taken at the harvest.[2] The menstruating woman is forbidden to enter fields or approach hazardous and important functions. Stories about the dire consequences of the presence of a menstruating woman are current throughout the island[3]. One such comes from Warakagoda in the Kalutara District. Artisans avoided all *kili* contacts. This extended to all craftsmen but the metal workers undertaking the manufacture of important and religious objects abstained even from intercourse with women. No woman was allowed to visit the workshop. And ceremonial purification by bathing is enjoined to remove any possible source of contact.

Actual sexual taboos applied to incestuous marriages with varying degrees according to the social organisation. For a multitude of reasons mating had to be restricted and controlled. And in this taboo the blood affinity was kept in prominent view. The incestuous union between parents and children, brother and sister is absolutely tabooed in Sinhalese society. Incest[4] between brother and sister is rare. According to the classificatory system prevalent in Sinhalese society brother and

1. Young girls or virgins are taken to say *avada* in the bali performance. The thread held by them must also be woven by them. In the anointing ceremony three virgins are expected to pour out the water.

2. The popular belief is that the *Polowa Bahiraya* (earth-guardians) are in charge of grain, being responsible for their hoarding and just distribution. Every farmer expects a surprise bestowal in the form of an extra deal (*wee dalla*).

3. Farmers obtined all their tools at the mouth of a cave called Vastugala. But on the day following the visit of a menstruating woman to the cave all the tools were withdrawn automatically and were never found again.

4. That this occurred is obvious since there are two legends which strongly condemned such actions, one is the *Naga-mala-ale* and the other is the *Giri-devige kathawa*. See Wijesekera's note in Man No. 13, 14—1943.

sister taboo extended to the children of brothers or sisters. And marriage was not allowed by custom between such ortho-cousins. As the same terms of relationship were used in addressing each other, such a marriage meant incest. The Sinhalese are very particular about it although the law allows it. But in Westernised Sinhalese society such unions, although rare, do take place as a device for preserving wealth and property within the same family.

Food taboos are also observed by the Sinhalese. Whether the descrimination is a relic of an ancient economic necessity for controlling food during a period of scarcity or of a social grouping in which the women ate and cooked one kind of food and men another it is not possible to assert with sureness. However, certain foods are prohibited to women during certain periods of life. During menstruation and pregnancy certain foods are specially taboo. But there is a belief that it is bad to partake of flesh[1] and fish at the same meal. This is clearly an economic adjustment for food conservation. There is also another belief that is popularly held, which prohibits the eating of flesh of creatures whose name ends in " ran "[2] as being *kili*.

So much for *kili*. There is another class of belief different from *kili* but considered ominous. These should be avoided. They are ominous (*a-subha*) and unlucky and should be considered as superstitious. As opposed to the unlucky there are lucky omens and these are termed *subha*. Tuesdays and Fridays are believed to be bad days for disposing of the dead and for bathing. Strangely enough unpleasant noises and queer sounds of birds, the sight of certain birds and members of religious orders must be avoided before any important undertaking. There are lists of auspicious and ominous sights and objects referred to in literature. Here is one such :

> " Watch for what is even more auspicious than the asterism itself the signs at the beginning of your journey, namely, the gentle fragrant breeze, fully laden jars (pea-cocks or) sweet mangoes, full-blown white blossoms, sweetly speaking maidens, golden urns, waving white chowries, white parasols and infuriated lordly elephants."[3]

It is also with this same end in view that the Sinhalese have adopted a special language for the use in the field[4] and jungle.

Another class of beliefs relating to the religious and secular life has gained currency through generations. This body is the growth rooted

1. Land animals and sea denizens.
2. Uran, Maguran, Moran. The exceptions are Thoran.
3. *Selalihini Sandesaya*—Wijesekera, 1934. Verse 16, p. 93. English Translation.
4. *The Govibashawa and Kelebashawa*. Also note the sign language in this connection.

in dim antiquity and influenced and modified by historic and pre-historic influences. Naturally there is much matter that savours of antiquity, primitiveness and superstition in the modern Sinhalese mental make up. The fusion of these with scientific facts is not yet complete. And the ancient and modern exist side by side each influencing the other and helping to maintain a continuous identity despite changing conditions. The beliefs are not external dressings but the internal core permeated with the spirit of each generation. An analysis of folklore as preserved in tradition, legend, myth and story will be able to evaluate such useful information as would shed light on the past psychology of the Sinhalese. Then the parallels with the active processes of modern living society could be detected. The superstitions may be explained. The origins of many a belief and custom could be made intelligible. Whatever any one might say of the Sinhalese customs and beliefs of today no one can deny the prevalence of a mass of residual material that has undergone little change. It is a credit to Buddhism that nowhere in the lands of its adoption has it attempted to suppress and exterminate the existing, indigenous cults, beliefs and customs. Its spirit of tolerance has permitted ample scope for even fusing and absorbing the minor beliefs of the new land. It was so in Ceylon. So the new and the old, the Buddhist and non-Buddhist beliefs remain side by side.

Birth is not such a remarkable phenomenon as death which leaves all the relatives helpless and sorrow-stricken. The body is there as before but life is extinct. The most provocative and gruesome aspect of death is this fact which makes people wonder as to the fate of the dead and where the dead have departed and how. Naturally another set of worlds is postulated where people are reborn according to their deeds or *Karma*. Such a world may be happy or unhappy. It may be one of human beings, spirits[1] demons or gods. As to how persons are reborn and how the identity is maintained puzzles everyone. But no one worries.

From this new abode of suspense or birth the departed spirit looks on the world he has just left. It may be for good or evil. Here dreams play an important role in bridging the gulf by bringing the two parties together. Various interpretations are suggested regarding such meetings in dreams. A certain fear as well as pity is aroused. And a desire to help the spirits follows. The series of ceremonies enforced on the near relatives of the diseased by custom are all directed towards the one end

1. Two Pali texts called the *Vimana Vatthu* and *Peta Vatthu* give details of these abodes of spirits and departed spirits.

of emancipating the spirits by a participation of merit. The regular alms-givings, and the performance of good deeds attempt to achieve this end whereby mutual benefits may result. There is thus a fear, respect and a spirit of goodwill prevailing between the dead and the living. Although a well-defined system of ancestor worship may not be apparent yet the traces of such elements may be suspected. The spirits are supposed to look after the family, help them in distress and generally act in a beneficient manner in return for acquiring merit on account of their good deeds. Hence the reason for soliciting consciously or unconsciously help from the dead parents. It is also believed that the spirits are reborn in the same family. And obvious resemblances of children to their grand parents prompting the bestowal of their names is another case in point.

Some of these spirits may be maleficient. Wandering in a state of suffering these seek re-incarnation in a better world. It is in this condition that some are born as ghosts. Belief in ghosts is island wide. Numerous stories are heard every day. The ghosts are dangerous entities who, in various guises, may haunt[1] houses, roads, places, fords and cemeteries. Persons born under certain asterisms cannot be harmed by the ghosts or devils. The ghosts show themselves in weird shapes and forms and cause terror by making unearthly noises, throwing stones and staging camouflaged incidents and obstructing.

Interesting stories of departed spirits wandering in a state of unrest find popular currency even today.

The stories of the Bodilima[2] and Huniyan Yakshaya[3] form one class, whilst that of Mohini,[4] Kalukumaraya[5] belong to another. The Gopalu Yaka[6] also causes mischief in a similar manner.

Semi-religious beliefs that have taken firm hold of the imagination of the people are many. Some of the personalities concerned are divine.

1. *Holman*, haunting, unseen appearances, unusual sounds, weird noises are *holman*.
2. Spittel, R. L.—the devil bird—in his book entitled *Wild Ceylon*. When a woman dies during childbirth with the child undelivered she is believed to be reincarnated as a spirit that spends her time in uttering painful cries resembling those of a woman in labour. This weird and unholy cry is sometimes heard in the villages.
3. A demoness who presents herself to lonely travellers in dark nights. She is dressed in pure white and goes about with an infant child in her arms. She solicits the solitary traveller to hold her babe whilst she adjusts her falling garments. If any one yields to her entreaties she instantaneously disappears with child. The person comes in for a high temperature and dies of a serious illness.
4. A beautiful young maiden who appears in the dreams of young men and tempt them to sleep with her. Her continuous visits induce frequent night emissions as to cause serious illnesses due to excessive wasting.
5. A beautiful young prince who appears in the dreams of young maidens and attempt to sleep with them with the idea of seducing them. Frequent visits cause serious illness. He is the counterpart of Mohini.
6. A spirit who in the guise of a cowherd appears in dreams before cowherds whilst in deep sleep. He attempts to throw them out of bed. If they get up and go they fall ill.

Others are deified human beings. There is thus introduced a supernatural element conferring divinity on lesser deities as well. The people believe in one Supreme Godhead with other lesser deities of varying rank, An interesting class is the Bandara[1] Group specially popular among upland areas. Above these groups of deities rank another five popular divinities whose influence spreads throughout the island with special reverence in certain localities. Each one has a regional pre-eminence over the other. So popular are these god-heads that their worship has entered into popular Buddhist belief to such a degree as to make their worship seem an essential part of Buddhist worship. Each has a place of worship and a separate abode. These five are called: (1) Kataragama (2) Saman, (3) Vishnu, (4) Natha, and (5) Pattini.

The origin of the first three is shrouded in mystery as their antiquity remains unknown. Perhaps these are new names of new god heads who were identified with older popular ones. Kataragama presides over Uva, Saman over Sri Pada environs, Vishnu along the coastal area from Tissa to Colombo and Pattini in Kurunegala. Natha is a later introduction. All five are worshipped in Kandy and are connected with the annual Kandy Perahera. Vishnu takes precedence over all. The popular identification of these is as follows : Saman is Laksmana, Rama's brother ; Kataragama is Kartikeya the Hindu God of War ; Vishnu is Uppalavanna an ancient guardian of the island. Natha is Maitriya or Padmapani the future Buddha. Pattini is the chaste wife who is mentioned in the Tamil epic.[2]

The inherent beliefs of the people in a variety of deities are so strong as to elude the superficial observer into accepting them as a part of Buddhism. In so far as the whole life is coloured by a worship, and devotion of these they enter into the living religion of the masses.

1. Probably these are national heroes who for service towards the community have been deified.
2. See *Silappaddivannan*. King Gajabahu is supposed to have introduced the worship into Ceylon on his return from South India.

XVII

MAGIC

PRIMARILY MAGIC[1] is power obtained in various ways for controlling the supernatural and directing the power for good or evil. The means to this end are multifarious. The efficacy of magic depends on the correct observance even in minute detail of the set ritual jealously guarded in certain families. Belief and faith in magic are themselves necessary for the perpetuation of the system. Magic may be employed both as a weapon of offence or defence.

Simple amulets or talismans form a popular class of magical protection. The origin of clothing and ornament may be attributed to such a conception. Today the children wear a *panchayudha*[2] with this idea. The claws of the leopard, the oil of the boa constrictor as well as other oils[3] are borne on the person for safety, security and protection from animals, spirits and unforeseen events. Another class of magic is the *yantra*[4] which is a metal case containing a charmed sheet of paper, palm leaf or metal foil of copper, silver, and gold drawn with figures and geometric designs. The preparation of the *yantra* is an art demanding secrecy, exactness, precision and purity, specially at the time of charming the contents. Charmed threads are also worn around the person in specific cases more as a prelude to a later performance if the patient recovers. It also acts as a curative treatment. The tying of the charmed thread may also be treated as a magico-religious amulet when it follows the chanting of *pirit*.[5] The evil effect of the evil eye, mouth or thought may also be cured by chanted thread, charmed water, benedictory verses or other forms of counter magic.

1. De Silva, W. A.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXX, No. 79, p. 193.
2. Piece of metal with sword, conch, disc, bow or trident worn as a necklace.
3. *Henarajathailaya* is a famous oil which is put in a metal case and tied on the person.
4. Special texts prescribing the procedure and art are still found, e.g., *Kanda kaksaye* and *Yantra-kaksaye*.
5. *Pirit* means the chanting of one or more *Pali suttas* from the *Sutta Pitaka*. A thread is passed around all present. A pot of water is kept near by and the Bhikkhus chant the *suttas* continuously. At the conclusion a portion of the thread is tied around the arm or neck and a bit of water is sprinkled on the face. In cases of difficult labour the *Angulimala Sutta* and the *Atanatika Sutta* are often recited.

Every culture practically contains a ritual based on the bloody sacrifice as the culmination of the performance. The blood sacrifice including that of human beings may have been practised in Ceylcn[1] at sometime or other. It may not have been for private gain but for communal good. As society advanced the substitutes in the form of animals and ruddy objects took the place of man. The sacrifice of the royal daughter of Kelani Tissa[2] in order to appease the enraged ocean is a reference at least to such a practice. Popular belief also admits the necessity of appeasing certain powers that preside over fords, mouths of rivers, bridges, junction of roads and other sites. At these rites annually, a victim[3] is taken without fail. The offering of a live cock and red-coloured cooked food in the *bali* performance is apparently a relic of an earlier blood sacrifice.

In dealing with magic of a more systematic nature it may be convenient to treat the subject under two main heads—(*a*) White, (*b*) Black. White magic attempts to effect the good of the individual and society, hence it is also called social ; whilst black magic works harm on the individual in particular and the society in general, hence it is anti-social. Two elaborate systems are practised under social magic, viz., *Bali* and *Tovi l*whilst under black magic one system is in secret practice viz *huniyan*. The fundamental concept underlying this type of magic is that the world is full of spirits, forces, and influences whose power when controlled by propitiation, offering, praise or threat may be directed in a chosen way for ensuring peace, prosperity and happiness. It is the same ancient idea which is given another new dressing. The spirits in question either expected material prosperity or desired release from the harassing power of other evil spirits. In course of time the evil influences were fixed as emanating from particular demons, spirits or influences. Some of these forces were planetary deities who were supposed to influence humanity. Thus was established the connexion between the system of demonology and astrology. The technical background of astrology was absorbed into the popular belief and practice thereby establishing a link between the astrologer and the *baliedura*. The former prescribed the specific type of *bali* and the latter carried out the instructions in full accordance with the traditions, customs, and technique.

Bali is an offering or a propitiatory oblation of rice, grain and other roasted foods presented to deities, spirits and demons in the expectation

1. Wijesekera, N. D.—The Idea of Sacrifice in Ancient Ceylon, Man—1944.
2. *Mahavamsa*. Translated by Geiger.
3. An accidental death is often attributed to such a cause where the unappeased power forcibly captures the victim.

of receiving in return certain benefits. The specific offerings are bestowed with due ritual by the particular officiant in the presence of a clay image or images temporarily moulded for the purpose. The images[1] are realistic representations beautifully painted in many colours by artists who themselves conduct the whole show. The officiants are called *bali-eduras* who are able to recite from memory the chants required for the occasion. Such narratives consist of a mixture of religious, legendary and mythical lore.

According to tradition there are over 13,200 *balis* suitable for occasions prescribed by the astrologer as suitable for each crisis and ailment. When a person falls ill, faces misfortune and fears danger ahead he consults the astrologer. The horoscope is read and the remedy is entrusted to the *bali-edura*. Bali deals with planetary influences, and is a system which works in association with demonology for combating evil. The ceremony[2] must be conducted in precise detail according to ancient tradition that is preserved in handbooks.[3] Ceremonial purification and the observance of taboos are essential prequisites for final success. Both the officiant and the patient must perforce observe them.

The *bali* ceremony commences at dusk in a special pavilion which contains the images arranged in a row in order of precedence. Dressed in clean garments the officiants utter the salutary verses in honour of the Buddha. The images are then uncovered and the history of the *bali* art and the life story of the particular deities concerned are elucidated. In a corner sits the patient. On one side a live cock is tied to a *bali* image. The food offerings are made over to the respective recipients. The oil lamps burn the whole night through. Flares are set up by burning rosin powder or torches. Dancing and chanting, drumming and jingling of bells continue unabated until the duration of the ceremony which sometimes lasts for two or three days. During this whole period a large amount of food is consumed both by the officiants and the helpers and the household incurs considerable expense which is rarely covered up by the gifts and presents.

Planetary offerings (*Graha Puja*) are made either by laymen or professional *bali-eduras* in a simple manner. A set ritual is also followed. The service lasts a short time daily at dusk but extends for three, six, or twelve months. A temporary small shed of coconut leaves is set up in the vicinity of the house in the particular quarter relating to the deity

1. The origins of early Sinhalese art may be preserved in this tradition.
2. De Silva, W.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXII–XXVIII.
3. *Bali-pot* preserves to this day some of this lore recorded in writing on ola leaves.

BALI IMAGES



Gara Yaka



Daha-ata-Sanniya



Maha-Son-Yaka



Amukku-Sanniya

REPRESENTATION OF DEMONS



Gaudi Rakshaya



Deva Mangallaya



Nilanga Rakshaya



Suwa Rakshaya

to be appeased. A light is lit daily and some food is placed. Incense is burnt. Finally the short ritual is carried out by chanting the praises and in the end help, aid and protection are prayed for.

The other class of social magic is connected with demonology.[1] It is believed that certain malevolent spirits cause harm and suffering by overpowering them. The system of such a control is by *Tovil.*[2] Since it is well known that every illness has a physical and magical cause the performance of *tovil* helps both to cure and expedite recovery. According to symptoms recognised in the diagnosis of the patient the *Kattadiya* (witch-doctor) will be able to know the particular devil causing the disease. A thread is tied in a particular manner after charming it in the burial ground or in solitude. Should the patient die the illness is considered incurable but should he recover the devil dance has to be staged for appeasing the particular devil and offering food to the others. It is at this performance that the threads tied on the arm, neck or waist are untied.

Tovil is a more serious affair than the *bali* since the former deals with demons. The ceremony is more elaborate, the dance is more vigorous and the whole show more complicated. There are no clay images. The dancers wear masks and personify the very demons. Instead of a pavilion there is an open structure called the *vidiya.* The show lasts at least one night.

The night is divided into three watches of ten Sinhalese hours each. Each watch is set apart for certain demons. There are altogether twenty-six demons. As is customary the dance of the *Gara Yaka* which is conducted both after *bali* and other propitiatory ceremonies brings the performance to a final conclusion.

Holding an intermediate position as it were between the *bali* and *tovil* is the magico-religious institutions of the five Devales each of which is associated with a particular deity. Under the patronage of each Devale social activities with a religious background are arranged for the benefit of the community participating in the events connected with each deity. The annual Perahera at Kandy is a co-ordinated effort at which all the Devales figure. But the majority of activities are connected with Pattini as the goddess of fertility, viz., the processions, *an edima, polgehima, peliyama* and board games, *pan-madu* and *devol-madu.* The alms-giving[3] to mothers is symbolic of fertility cults since the

1. Gooneratne. D. de S.—*J.R.A.S.*, 1885–6.

2 *Tovil* is a performance calculated to over-power malevolent spirits, specially powerful demons. The system is very elaborate.

3. So called as mothers' feast and connected with fertility; *Kiriammalage Dane, Mauwarunge Dane.* Cp. Saptamatris. in India

participation of chaste matrons is an essential requirement of this type of feast.

Huniyam which refers to the whole system of black magic is a secret practice whose success depends on the faith of the people and the secrecy of the art. For, if the fact is known it is possible to counteract the evil to the detriment of the author. Hence the art and the authors remain underground. Black magic is directed to work harm on an individual or family by killing outright or disabling mentally or physically. The magician or the Kattadiya is able to detect and diagnose the type of magic that has been performed on a person or family and knows how to " cut " the *huniyam* and remove the cause of the danger or go a stage further in redirecting the same evil force on the author himself. It is for this reason that secrecy has to be strictly maintained. Many magical principles operate in this art and the whole system is based on these primitive beliefs. There is also a demon[1] who is the master of the art. The following are the sub-divisions of *Huniyam* :—

(1) Jivam,
(2) Bandhana,
(3) Kodiwina,
(4) Angam,
(5) Pilli.

It is certainly on account of this deep rooted fear of black magic[2] that the Sinhalese carefully dispose of a fallen tooth or hair, isolate the menstruating woman, reject food and drinks offered by strangers, refuse to be "shot " by the camera lest these personal elements may be used to work harm against the person.

A note may be added about the persons who practise *bali, tovil,* and *huniyam.* The astrologer and the Kapurala also find reference here. All the aforementioned persons are in a way magicians in a greater or lesser degree and their presence in the village is still deemed necessary. All the officials may be divided into two classes, namely, the " Gurunnanses " who usually belong to a lower caste[3] and the Kapuralas who belong to the Goigama caste, though of course there is nothing to prevent a high caste person from being an official of the former class. The astrologer (ganithaya) *kendra balanna* or *kendra kiyanna* reads the horoscopes and forecasts the coming events prescribing at the same time the specific ritual, *puja* or *bali* that should be conducted. When the ritual

1. *Huniyam Yaka.*
2. Nell, L.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. VII, Pt. 2, p. 116.
3. Usually belongs to the Nakathi or Oli caste.

is a *bali* or *puja* the *bali-edura* is summoned. There are groups and families of such persons who function under a leader. The art and knowledge are preserved and handed down in families. The learning is done by observation and experience. Among them are clever artists and skilled painters. Some of these possess a remarkable retentive memory power and can repeat formulae for days. The *yakaduras* or *yakdessas* who deal with *tovil* and know all about demons are more daring and vigorous men. Their business is to dance, chant and act the part of the demons. The demons must be made to appear in person. Masks and other dress and ornaments have to be put on. At times the dancer actually loses consciousness and merely acts in a frenzy. He has to be revived by fanning and sprinkling of water. The *Kattadiya* steps in when magic is suspected. He operates in simple cases such as tying threads, cutting lime as well as more dangerous black magical activities. He appears a very simple ordinary person, however clever he may be. That is the nature of the profession. But the people know the expert wherever he is since he is, essential for removing black magic even if someone else has committed the crime.

The Kapurala is the incumbent of the Devale which is an institution in many ways similar to the Hindu temple in administration, organisation, and supervision. The Brahamin may be compared to the Kapurala who is a lay priest, in some cases actually descended from a Brahamin. The succession of title and function is from father to son. No one except a higher authority is permitted admission to the (shrine) holy of holies. The Devales are opened to the devotees on special days.[1] The Kapurala accepts the vows in cash or kind and performs the *puja*. Each devale has a perahera during which the emblems are conducted in procession and this follows the Esala Perahera at Kandy. The Devales are arranged under one head for each and he is called the Basnayake Nilame. The incumbent of the Pattini is also called Pattini. The whole organisation has become degenerated and corrupt. The Kapuralas are ordinary illiterate villagers who live by means of the public collections. Except for the religio-magical devotion of the votaries there is nothing to commend them to their respective deities to act as mediaries between god and man.

1. Wednesdays and Saturdays are the normal days called *Kem Mura*.

XVIII
BUDDHISM IN PRACTICE

Of the two types of Buddhism known as *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* Ceylon adheres to the doctrines of the *Hinayana*, although in actual practice aspects of other beliefs are also incorporated within it. The average Sinhalese is less interested in the philosophical aspects and deeper doctrines of Buddhism. Its ethical and moral discipline are seldom observed. This is due to their easy going way of life and unquestioning attitude. Perhaps the difficulties of the doctrine contribute in no small measure to a non-realisation of the path of life in the modern world. A large mass of external trappings and beliefs in the form of magic, ceremonial show and gaiety have been taken for the real doctrine itself. The Buddhist imagination has been attracted by the more popular primitive ideas of *bali*, *tovil* and magic since in these the people feel an immediate material benefit in this very existence rather than in a future state of being. To the superficial observer the religious beliefs of the Sinhalese and their practices must certainly appear as demonological and their worship iconic. Nevertheless, the people would feel insulted if they are told this as they themselves know when they are practising religion and when they resort to magic. It is true that magic and mysticism do enter their thoughts, ceremonial and ritual satisfy their imagination and strengthen their confidence. But that is no great wonder when we consider their social organisation and struggle for existence.

Buddhism, under the royal patronage of the king who was the head of the Sangha[1] and the laity was a grand organisation in which the Sangha had a place with definite functions and duties. The people were responsible for ministering to them. The Bhikkhus had a rigid code of behaviour. With the passing away of the old order the organisation has broken down leaving the Sangha in some cases unprovided and a burden on the laity. The wealth and lands belonging to the temples are

1. The fraternity of Bhikkhus. The king looked after the welfare of the Sangha and endowed the temples with lands and fields for their maintenance. This made the Sangha an independent body.

being used sometimes as private property of the incumbent himself. The temples are neglected. The institution[1] of the Sangha is in dissolution. The laymen have lost that ancient and customary veneration for the monks. The laity and the Sangha are divided into a multitude of groups each ministering to a particular sect. The temples have become family concerns. The unity of the Sangha is lost nor is there any amity amongst themselves. The rigid discipline is relaxing and the respected robes of the Buddha have in some cases been transformed today to veil the identity of the illiterate, and undesirables who parade in the guise of the members of the Sangha. The blame for such a pitiable degeneration rests equally on the laymen as well as the Sangha. The laity have missed the spirit of Buddhism, and its tenets and code of behaviour. The duties of the Sangha have been confused with those of their own. New ideas have changed the sense of values in a most illogical manner. Buddhism has been mixed up with politics where it has been prostituted for personal vanity and individual satisfaction. True nationalism and culture are wrongly understood and interpreted and religion in practice has come to mean the erection of a few preaching halls, dagobas and image houses and the conducting of a few public processions and loud shouting at a few public meetings.

At the present time there are at least three main sects [2] of the Sangha, viz., the Siamese, Amarapura and Ramanna. Originally each one differed from the other on certain points, but later these differences have assumed immense proportions as to give rise to distinctions and dissension and even bitter rivalry. Considerations of birth and distinctions of caste prevail in each sect, leading to differences in procedure, admission, ordination and ritual. Thereby Buddhism as a whole has suffered considerably during the last few centuries. The Sinhalese Buddhists themselves criticise the conduct of the Bhikkhus, their faults and their acts of omission and commission. But they have done nothing to remedy this sad state of affairs. The root cause of the degeneration is the lack of system and want of organisation. The general backwardness results from lack of education and forced admission[3] to the

1. Probably due to persecution both by conquerors and the government. There was mass persecution under the Portuguese and Dutch. Then proselytization and conversion for merely getting government jobs. Even a marriage could not be solemnized unless the parties were Christians.

2. See below for the three main sects (*nikayas*). There is also an order of nuns living in recognised nunneries or individually maintained by friends and relatives. These follow ten precepts and are called "those who keep the ten precepts."

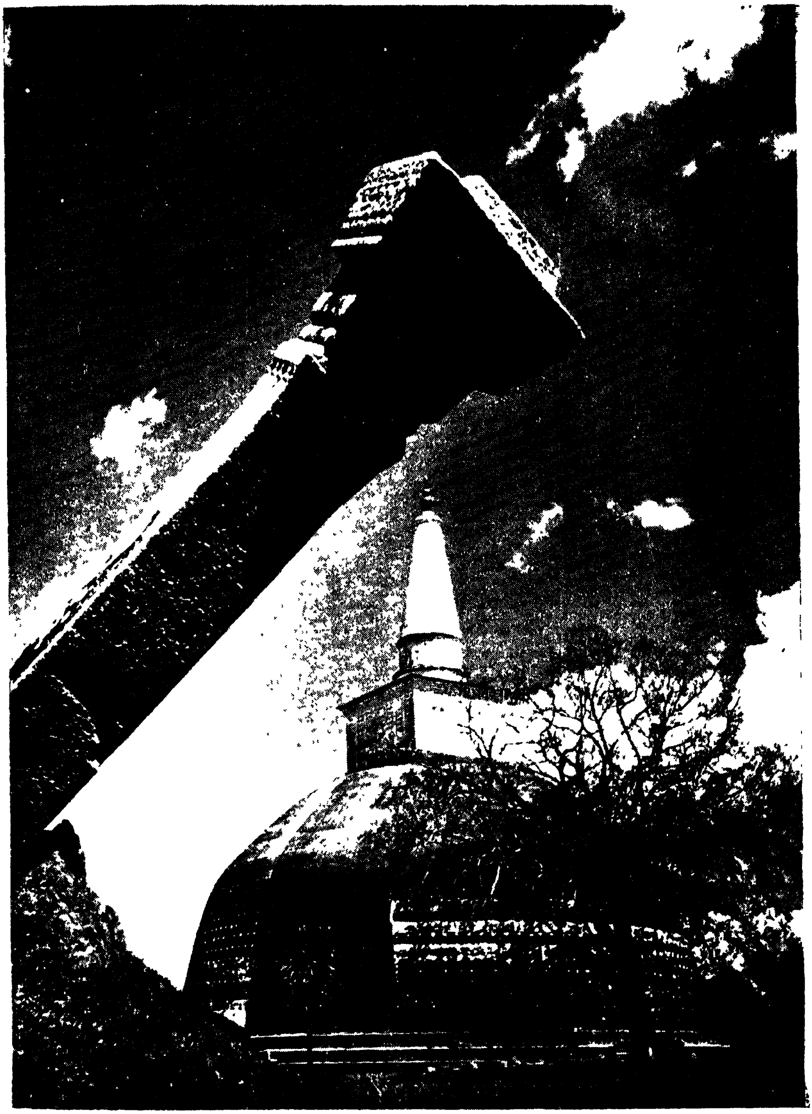
3. A child who is pronounced by the astrologer as having little chance of surviva or an invalid or unfit is chosen to be ordained. The actual admission takes place in infancy without choice or proper education. Naturally when the individual grows up he desires the worldly life. But it is too late He could be a misfit if he leaves the order. He hasn't also the courage, So he remains

Sangha. Greater mutual understanding, better association and proper systematisation should lead to considerable improvement.

The prelude to this chapter should not be misunderstood and misinterpreted for mischievous propaganda. It should neither create the wrong impression that the whole Sangha is rotten and Buddhism is only a mass of diabolical beliefs. The Sangha on the whole, is sound. And Buddhism in its purity is still there. The wonder of it all is the fact that despite many obstacles, set backs and positive acts of extermination it has continued to influence millions in Ceylon. The yellow robe, the symbol of the Buddha, finds veneration, respect and honour wherever it is seen amongst the Buddhist community. This fact is not in the least surprising when it is realised that the culture of the Sinhalese has for the last 2,000 years been nurtured in unbroken continuity by the life blood of Buddhist thought.

The unsophisticated peasant has this feeling of gratitude since he, however poor his condition may be, will never permit a Bhikkhu to sit on any seat but the highest and that also always covered with the cleanest possible cloth in his possession. Every possible care is exercised to have precincts swept clean if a Bhikkhu is invited home. The food is most carefully prepared and the water strained. All that is best is always offered to the Bhikkhus. That the Sangha lived in close association with the laity, participating in feasts and festivals, advising and visiting on special occasions and family crises is proved by the fact that their presence is a pre-requisite of every special occasion. There was a religious obligation, a social necessity and a magical influence that required every Buddhist to see that the Bhikkhus were represented.

Starting from birth and ending with death and after, the Bhikkhu maintains a bond of association as family friend, adviser and religious guide. Family problems were discussed with him. Serious village affairs were brought to his notice. No action was taken without his knowledge and approval. Even in personal matters he was consulted. In the village he was the friend of all and leader in everything. The whole village obeyed his command. The disintegration of the social organisation by the introduction of a new system under a foreign government entailed the dissociation of the Sangha and the laity. Today the old order is no more and the two classes stand far apart, meeting only when obligatory. The repayment of their service finds expression in invitation to feasts that are generously bestowed. There is no legal payment. But the alms giving is a sure way of acquiring merit by all dead and living.



A boy intending to join the Sangha learns as an apprentice under a Bhikkhu working as a personal attendant.[1] He receives the preliminary training for a time. Then he is admitted into the Sangha as a novice. The ritual of ordination is elaborate and impressive. After the purification with water the acolyte boy is dressed as a young prince and then the regal garments are cast aside. Finally the robes are put on. The young Bhikkhu is taught Sinhalese, Pali and Sanskrit and then sent to a Pirivena in the village. The education of a Bhikkhu is considered incomplete if he does not graduate in Colombo at the Vidyodaya Pirivena or Vidyalankara or Asgiriya or Malwatte at Kandy. These are the chief centres of Oriental learning. The higher ordination or *Upasampada* is conferred after some time. Then the Bhikkhu takes charge of a temple or lives in his own temple. The favourite pupil succeeds to the temple of his teacher.

A Buddhist temple or Pansala consists of a Dagoba (relic chamber), Vihara Pilimage (image house), Bo-tree, Preaching Hall (bana maduwa), Belfry (ghantara) and other living apartments. All these are situated within close proximity of each other even if the extent of land available is large. In a big institution a Pirivena is also housed for teaching the Bhikkhus of the temple and those of the neighbouring ones. Any one may enter the temple premises during day time. The gates are closed at night. Anyone is permitted to worship at the shrines but everyone is expected to enter the vicinity and worship after removing foot wear and head gear. Scattered throughout the island are a large number of temples, some ancient and others modern. The four quarters of the lunar month have been associated with Buddhist worship and observances from ancient times. Of these the full moon day comes in for special devotion. Perhaps the lunar calendar and the illumination of the full moon helped to perpetuate the custom of worshipping on full moon days. The Vesak moon was the brightest of them all since innumerable illumiations added to the brightness of the moonlght.

Full moon day is a day of special merit and all must go to the nearest temple. It is a gay time for the poor folk and the labouring classes. But others also join. The simplest clothing is worn, white being preferred to all others. Plainest ornaments are worn by the women. Some observe *sil*, some meditate, others abstain from killing and eating flesh and eggs. The rest go to the temple for offering flowers and to listen to a sermon. Whole families visit temples in the moon light. Some carry

1. The stages of normal graduation are : Acolyte, *Ebiththaya* ; Novice, *Samanera* ; *Bhikkhu*, Bhikshn. Then *anu-nayaka*, *nayaka* and *mahanayaka*.

flowers with them. Others accept flowers free or buy some for a small price. Hands are washed with strained water. The flowers are also sprinkled with water. Flowers are then placed in order at the dagoba, Bo-tree and image house. A set formulae, and stanzas generally known by heart are repeated during the offering of flowers. Candles are lighted. Camphor and incense are burnt before the shrines. Finally, the five precepts[1] are uttered by oneself or repeated after a Bhikkhu says them. In conclusion a short time is spent on meditation and the homage ends by offering merit to gods in a formula. Those who observe the eight precepts[2] keep the whole day pure and holy, abstain from solid food after noon and meditate. On a full moon day it is customary to arrange for a sermon to be delivered by a reputed Bhikkhu. Crowds foregather if the Bhikkhu happens to be a leading preacher from Colombo. It is usual to preach from the *Sutta Pitaka*,[3] but seldom does one deal with the *Abhidhammapitaka*. The sermon lasts for hours even after the audience seated around the preacher on the mats spread on the floor begin to fall asleep. The crowds return home discussing the preacher's ability, dress and ornaments of the people and incidents connected with the evening.

There are other crises of life at which the presence of the Bhikkhu is essential. On such occasions the Bhikkhu is invited to the abode of the person who has suffered the loss or gain. One strong reason for the support of the institution of the Sangha is this. The crises referred to bear a magic significance as well. Although many crises may be observed a few important ones may be recorded. They are, marriage, birth, building a new house, *pirit*, sickness and death. At these incidents or previous to them the Bhikkhus are invited home. Received with honour in great pomp and ceremony the Bhikkhus are entertained. Presents are offered. The ceremony concludes by the participation of merit by all present.

During many stages of erecting a new house the Bhikkhus are invited to bless the new venture, chant *pirit*[4] and remove all ill luck. After the completion they are invited to chant *pirit* for ensuing prosperity and afterwards fed sumptuously. When a marriage is arranged the house-

1. The precepts in detail : (1) I will refrain from taking life ; (2) I will refrain from stealing ; (3) I will refrain from adultery ; (4) I will refrain from falsehood ; (5) I will refrain from alcoholic drinks.

2. Addiction of three to the five precepts : (6) I will refrain from taking meals at unreasonable times of the day ; (7) I will refrain from using high and lofty seats ; (8) I will refrain from visiting fairs and shows.

3. The Doctrine of the Buddha is included under three pitakas, viz., *Sutta*, *Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma*.

4. *Pirit* is a general prophylactic against all misfortune. It helps to supply courage and confidence. Certainly there is a magical belief in its efficacy.

holders give alms as a first step. In sickness the Bhikkhus are welcome to chant *pirit*. During the last month of pregnancy a special *pirit* ceremony is arranged so that the expectant mother may go through the difficult period in safety. The Bhikkhus should be rewarded in some suitable way for all the spiritual aid rendered towards the householders by them on various occasions. Apart from the casual help freely given whenever demanded the householder arranges special feasts which are in a way the logical conclusion of many rituals. Some of these alms-givings are obligatory and must be given lest the reputation suffer and the departed ancestors feel neglected.

The funeral obsequies called the *pansukula*[1] are by far the most important part of any ritual since the dead as well as the living are involved. No dead body of a Sinhalese Buddhist, however poor he may be and whatever the status, would be disposed of without the administration of the *pansukula* ceremony. It would be a misfortune of the dead and the highest disgrace for the living if the dead have to be disposed of without this final act of grace. Such cases are extremely rare even in the remotest villages of the dry-zone.

Having prepared the dead body for disposal the Bhikkhus are invited to the home or the grave yard. They are offered liquid refreshments and a chew of betel. The body is placed in the presence of the Sangha. The ceremony commences with the administration of *pansil* to all present. A short sermon[2] intended to console the near and dear relatives by a reference to the Buddhist doctrine is uttered by a senior Bhikkhu. Other leading Bhikkhus follow up with short eulogistic speeches. Laymen also speak well of the departed friend. All the references attempt to convince the relatives that the departed one will be reborn in a happier and a better world. Sometimes the orations extend to inordinate lengths leaving those present bored to death. White cloth is offered to the Bhikkhus and the nearest relatives are asked to pour water out of a vessel into a plate or cup whilst the company of Bhikkhus utter a short verse.[3] The body is then placed in the grave or pyre with head pointing to the west. If the body is cremated the pyre is lighted by a nephew or son-in-law. Then the Bhikkhus leave the place.

An alms-giving to the Bhikkhus in memory of the dead person is arranged within a week, three months, six months and a year. The

1. Is the presentation of a roll of cloth for the making of robes.
2. Dealing with *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
3. It is : *Idam me natinam hotu, sukhita hontu natayo.*

annual alms-giving is continued. It is usually a *Sanghika Dana* at which the minimum number of Bhikkhus participating must be five. An *atapirikara*[1] must also be offered at such an occasion. It is usual for the Bhikkhus to chant *pirit* or a sermon on the evening prior to the day of the feast. The village temples in the vicinity are informed and the number of Bhikkhus required is stated. The total number invited depends on the ability of the donor. Large quantities of the best food available are prepared. These consist of fish, flesh, sweets, fruits, coconut water, curds, honey, tea, and coffee. Every ounce of care, attention, ability and devotion goes in to these preparations.

When the arrangements for receiving the honoured guests are complete drums[2] are sounded and a party goes to the village temple to conduct the Bhikkhus in procession. The Bhikkhus prefer a car or 'bus to walking on foot. A relic casket[3] is carried on the head under a canopy by a layman who leads the procession. The music continues. Before entering the house the feet are washed with water mixed with cow milk and dried with a towel. The Bhikkhus are conducted to the special area where low seats have been prepared. All the food and presents are placed within view in front of the seats on the ground laid with mats. Everything that has to be offerred is placed here. The Bhikkhus take their seats in order of rank.

Feeding commences soon after, as meals have to be taken before noon. As Bhikkhus are not supposed to take anything without being actually offered they have to be lavishly served. The servants and poor neighbours help in the serving. The Bhikkhus accept everything in silence only expressing sufficiency by a show of the hand. Verbally they should not ask or reject but they may do so by indirect statements and suggestions.[4] One is sometimes pleased at their appetites[5] and the ability to eat such a variety of things. The meal is concluded by the chewing of betel[6] and the use of tooth picks.[7] After a short respite the purpose of the feast is explained. The host is praised. Giving of alms is commended. Finally, merit of good deeds is partici-

1. These consist of the eight essential requisites of a Bhikkhu : (1) Begging bowl; (2) Outer robe ; (3) Inner robe ; (4) Double robe ; (5) Razor ; (6) Needle ; (7) Belt ; (8) Strainer.
2. *Hevisi* consist of the music that is played in heralding the Bhikkhus. The band of players lead the procession in all cases. Then the casket of relics immediately follow the Bhikkhus. Laymen walk last.
3. A dagoba shaped casket supposed to contain sacred relics.
4. The old habit of asking for more is by pointing that the neighbour wishes more. Today good many of them express their own wishes.
5. This may be understood when it is remembered that they take no solids after noon and also seldom enjoy such feasts.
6. Known as *deheth*.
7. Known as *leheti*.

pated in by those departed and others present in a formula. Here also water is poured from a pot into a cup or plate. The presents include fans, umbrellas, towels and a complete *atapirikara* or parts of it. The Chief Bhikkhu distributes the presents according to the needs of each temple or person. Finally, the Bhikkhus are sent back to their respective temples either in procession or singly. Of course the procession is heralded by the sounding of music and led by the bearer of the casket.

The feast commences by "receiving" the five precepts. Everything that is placed before them is then offerred to the Sangha. Anything left over from what has been made over at the commencement is never taken for the donor's use. Such remnants are either given to the temple or to the acolyte or beggars.

A reference to the worship of trees and images[1] should be added as a certain doubt prevails as to whether Buddhism actually embraces such primitive beliefs. It is a fact that Buddhists do pay homage to the Bo-tree, images of the Buddha and other deities. But the question is whether in their act of obeisance and homage the devotees do show veneration to the actual material form or to the idea represented by that material form. There is no doubt in the mind of any devotee that he or she is honouring the Buddha as remembered and recalled to mind by an objective visualisation. This is the only explanation and there is no other. The worship of other objects unconnected with the life of the Buddha is certainly not Buddhism. But in such cases one may see a magic influence since the spiritual expectation is not present in such acts. An expectation of a reward, if not expressly stated, is implied in the worship of other deities. Another point that may not be denied is that primitive beliefs have not completely left the mind of man however advanced he may be. Apart from the fascination of such beliefs there is the added attraction of material reward in this very world. And, since Buddhism at no stage was intolerant, the primitive beliefs not only penetrated and influenced Buddhism but also continued side by side.

The presence of the Bhikkhus at and after the critical stages of family life may be explained as an unconscious attempt to direct all danger towards them in the hope that if further misfortune must necessarily follow they would either act as absorbers or warders. The purity of their life ensures their immunity as well, so that they are the only persons who even if they should be visited with such misfortune may not be affected as a community. Thus society needs them and constantly

1. Compare the modern practice of laying wreaths before tombs, monuments and honouring the dead at cenotaphs.

depends on them, although unconsciously, to act not only as spiritual helpers but also as buffers against aggressive tendencies of unknown powers. The Bhikkhus themselves are not aware of this implicit service.

XIX

GREETINGS AND RESPECT

THE HUMAN hand figures in salutation in a variety of ways. The antiquity of the practice finds proof in ancient art.[1] The modern manifestation is found in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Soviet Russia. The ancient Indian form[2] of salutation was clasping the hands in front of the face and held high up. This method, with variations of the position of the hand changing from forehead to the foot, has survived in India and Ceylon. The Sinhalese adopt this form of salutation at worship, greeting Bhikkhus and persons above one's rank. Except in the case of the monk the superior must return the salute by clasping the hands. Otherwise it shows bad form. The Sinhalese worship prostrate with the forehead, knees and feet touching the ground in front of the image, shrine or person. One's parents and Bhikkhus are worshipped in this wise. All strangers are greeted by a clasp of the hands. It may be remarked that the degree of respect in the act of greetings may be inferred from the position of the hands and the inclination of the body. This varies from an erect position to a horizontal one.

The national form of salutation has led to much abuse and even misunderstanding. The worst offenders were and are the Europeans and arrogant aristocratic Sinhalese who have interpreted the common salutation to mean an acknowledged superiority amounting to worship. Very respectable persons have been abused in public on this score either on account of this form of salutation or as a result of it. The hand shake is popular among the higher and more Westernised circles, even the Veddas[3] now resorting to this method. It is absent in upland areas and in a family among parents and children and nearest relatives. The Christians have almost given up the national form for the European. Amongst members of one family and the nearest relatives greetings at meeting and at sight are seldom expressed, but on special ceremonial

1. Pre-historic cave art of Europe.
2. Wall paintings of India and Ceylon.
3. The Veddas used to greet friends and strangers by clasping the shoulders and then dancing with joy before them. Today the Vedda living in the remotest jungles will stretch out his hands in salutation.

occasions kissing on the cheeks is the custom. This is not an acutal osculation but a co-ordination of osculation and smelling.[1]

Greetings and respect depended on caste and rank. This is so even now. In the towns one is apt to forget and even overlook them. But in the village the custom continues and in the towns it is not dead.

Two institutions where the servile aspect of the hand-clasp salutation finds forced encouragement is the home and the antiquated office. The servants and subordinate staff help to perpetuate it under compulsion. Headmen and even officials of certain government departments coach trained attendants to see that visitors and officers under them use the proper terms of address and show the proper genuflections, spinal deflections and manual salutations. Those who lay special emphasis in their performance and are particular in reviving the feudal aspect of the greeting mostly belong to the crumbling links of the new aristocracy, who have manoeuvred themselves into elevated positions where they do not deserve but have to command special attention. These families are the descendants themselves of the opportunists who exploited the situation created by the British occupation to capture for themselves special positions and ranks whilst the genuine aristocrats of the land languished in the hinterland.

In the average village home few stand on ceremony. An air of freedom and mutual respect charcterise the general behaviour. The bearing and address towards each other within the same family are guided by customary practice. Respect is earned and requires no enforcement. Love is felt but seldom expressed. Thanks are not shouted but implied. The Sinhalese have a nice way of expressing[2] respect, gratitude and love by the tone and terminology of the language as well as the demeanour and bearing. Among equals *Umba* or *Tamuse* is the common term of address. It is also used by a superior towards an inferior. *Tho* is used to address menials and sometimes servants, and for abuse.[3] It is also used as a term of endearment.

In the Sinhalese homes mother is called *Amma* or *Mamma*[4] and the father *Appa*, *Appochchi*, *Tattha* and *Pappa*. The parents address the sons as *puta* or by name and daughter as *duva* or by name. When the children are referred to in their absence the first name with an honorific

1. *Simbinawa* means to smell.
2. De Alvis, James—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. III, No. 10.
3. One of the most interesting pieces of research would be the words and terms of abuse both decent and indecent. It would throw light on other social problems as well. Such a collection would be most valuable.
4. The English words mummy and daddy are often used in anglicised homes.

is used. These are : *Sinno, Appuhamy, Ralahamy, Mahatmaya, Hamu, Hamuduruvo,* or *Unnanse.* The parents seldom call each other by name but draw attention by words like *Meya, Ehunada, Me, Aiyse, Darlo, Dear,*[1] but if one is referred to in the presence of the children the word used by them is used. In talking to strangers the mother refers to the father in his absence as the father of the children[2] or by the term used by strangers. The same holds true when the father refers to the mother.[2] The grandmother is called *Achchi,* and the grandfather *Ata, Siya,* or *Mutta. Aiya* and *Akka* are used for elder brother and sister whilst *Malli* and *Nangi* for younger brother and sister respectively. The other relations are addressed by name or part of it with the relationship term as *Asoka massina, Sita nenda.* Sometimes the village name is prefixed as *Kande Muttha, Bentota Nona.* It is usual for the young to call an elderly person by name with the suffix *Ayya* if male and *Akka* if female irrespective of their social position and wealth. The servants address the males of the house as *Appuhamy, Ralahamy Mahatmaya, Hamu,* or *Hamuduruwo* and the females as *Hamine, Nona, Hamu, Walawwe-mahatmaya* or *hamuduruvo* according to instruction. Further distinctions are made by prefixing the words *Bala, Vedimal, Hin, Podi, Punchi, Madduma Loku* and *Kuda.*[3]

The variety of costumes worn by the Sinhalese helps to perpetuate the class system in a marked manner and thereby stands in the way of unity. The dress also denotes the social position of the wearer. Further, there is preserved in the dress a historical evolution of the society in all stages. The person who puts on a pair of trousers is always addressed as " Gentleman " (*Mahatmaya*) whatever his rank may be, whilst the most respectable may be addressed discourteously if he wears any other mode of dress. It is usual to call a Sinhalese with his upper body bare a *Gamarala* ; with coat and cloth a *Mudalali ;* with coat and tie and cloth and shoes a *Ralahamy.* The women, usually the class of peasant and working girls, are addressed as *Nangi, Akka, Amma,* or *Achchi.* The European women wearing skirts are addressed as *Nona* whilst *Nona Mahatmaya* is generally applied to all women, Ceylonese and foreign. *Hamine* is the feminine of *Ralahamy* or *Appuhamy* and is even today a term of great respect in the rural areas. There are other shades of usage applicable in special circumstances. The terms in popular usage are all the time undergoing change whilst the social positions of

1. The more westernised use the last three terms.
2. The phrase is *Lamayinge tatta* or *amma.*
3. In the uplands the terms of address vary slightly " Banda " with one of those prefixes being the most popular name. There are other prefixes such as Ran, Kiri, ...

persons also change from time to time. The latest class of *Ralahamy* is the police constable. Once more the word *Hamu*, once only used for both male and female children of titular ranked officers, is beginning to replace *Mahatmaya*. For fear or favour every Sinhalese comes to be called so at some time.

Reference has been already made to the Bhikkhus. In addressing them the same terms as were used for the king are employed. The Bhikkhus address the laymen in very polite and respectful terms. They call the ordinary man and woman *Upasaka* or *Upasika* respectively. It is not customary to address women. The other persons are addressed in general terms as used by the people. The laity still maintain the same traditional respect as was due to the Buddha. They address the Bhikkhu as *hamuduruvo, or swaminvahanse*. One usually assents with *eheyi* and not *ov*. If one meets a Bhikkhu on the road one stands on a side and lets him pass, if one is seated one gets up and sits on a lower seat. The highest form of respect known in the land is paid to a Bhikkhu.[1]

The village folk are timid by nature, obliging in peace, unconcerned about modern ideas and curious by instinct. They suffer poverty and misfortune with philosophical resignation. Temperamentally, they are serious, irritable and vindictive.[2] They respect those who deserve respect and not those who command it. The person and not the office is respected by them. In showing respect and courtesy the villager is generous to a fault. This mental predisposition has been, times without number exploited, shamelessly misinterpreted and woefully abused as an undisputed inferiority complex. Naturally it is nothing more than a hall mark of culture inherited by the true Sinhalese.

No one is a stranger in a village. There is no posing, and no one attempts to stand on dignity. The respected rich nobleman and the poorest peasant mix and move together without feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable. They visit each other and move in and out of each other's house in perfect amity. That at no time and on no occasion the position, rank and social status are forgotten is felt by the terms of address and the mode of behaviour. If one meets the other on the road the usual address is *Kohomada Ayubovan, Berak da*[3] *? Ne me langata* is the ready reply. If women accompany the men, light loads and babies

1. There is a strong attempt made by certain families to maintain this terminology in their homes and business.

2. Murder by stabbing with a pointed knife is the result of hasty loss of temper in most cases than that of deliberate pre-meditation. A spirit of vengeance still prevails.

3. How, long life, where to, no close by.

are entrusted to them whilst the heavier loads are taken by the men. The women keep to the rear[1] of the party. . In the presence of a respectable personage the lesser folk would stand aside making way for him. At the same time he would be paid all due respect by uncovering the head and shoulder if there is a towel or any other cloth. The women would stand silent manifesting their greetings by a slight smile. The men would enquire "where to?" Then they would take leave. If the parties are related then the talk would be more intimate, if equals, most informal. In all these greetings, either implicit or expressed, there is such a sweet nicety of manner and an innate charm of goodwill as deserving of cultivation by the rest of the Ceylonese. Love and affection at parting or meeting are seldom displayed by osculatory embraces in public except by the aged grand-mothers and aunts who kiss on both cheeks.[2] Every one pays respect to the dead by standing and uncovering the head as the cortege passes. To the Buddhist it is also a moment for meditation on impermanence, suffering and no soul.[3]

Thanks and gratitude are expressed by granting merit as *pin siddha veccave*,[4] *karunavai*. Seldom does one express verbally the feeling of gratitude but often it is felt and implied. There may appear a certain rudeness in this mode of silent appreciation but that apparent rudeness should be preferred to a distinct uncouthness of the popular literal translation of the English expression.[5] It is as inappropriate as the Colombo Radio Station's parting greeting to the Sinhalese listeners as "good night"[6] which jars on the ear as a foreign and unidiomatic usage. Along with the blind immitation of so many foreign customs the finer elements of Sinhalese social usages are being forgotten and lost and it is feared that the hand shake and the kiss may come to stay.

" What charming hospitable people the Sinhalese are," falls from the lips of almost every visitor to Ceylon. It may be a more polite expression, but it contains the literal truth. The Sinhalese peasant imbued with Indian culture still practises the ancient custom even in a changing world. Such a generous disposition has become second nature to him. He will offer help, food, drink and shelter to even the complete stranger.

1. The practice may be a relic of the ancient order whereby the men had to go in front as it was likely to meet with unknown dangers like animals, thieves when walking through jungle paths. So the women were safer behind.

2. The writer still remembers how his aged grandmother used to embrace him and kiss him on the cheeks thereby leaving the impression of betel saliva on his face. It is actually smelling and the Sinhalese word is *Simbinawa*.

3. *Anichcha, Dukkha, Anatta.*

4. May there be merit, mercy.

5. *Sthuthiy* or *bohoma sthuthiy* : Thank you.

6. *Subha rathriyak wewa* : May the night be good.

At great personal inconvenience, suffering and hardship the peasant ministers to the needs of the guest. The differences of colour, race or religion matter not in the least; the visitor or guest must be satisfied lest great shame may befall the village in particular and the Sinhalese in general. Any casual visitor, traveller or officer of the Public Service who happened to have visited the remote parts of the island cannot fail to bear testimony to this sterling quality.

According to the ancient order of things provision had been made for the stranger, visitor or traveller by erecting resorts[1] where they could shelter and live. These were the State Rest Houses (Ambalam). Today, these buildings accommodate beggars and the destitute. The resthouse alone remains as a part of the Government organisation.

Invited guests are received with great pomp and ceremony and greeted with all honour and respect. The roads and pathways are decorated. Sand is strewn on the ground. Flags are hoisted. Archways are erected. One large structure called a *gedi-ge* hung with coconuts, leaves and paintings is put up whereon the words "Welcome to so and so," are inscribed. The whole village flock to honour a special person and the occasion not only satisfies the vanity of all those concerned but also gratifies the village. Further, the village pride is enhanced and the mind of the villager finds much matter for contemplation. The impression lasts until another occasion supersedes the event.

1. An *ambalama, madama* or *tanayama* is such an institution where the people could take food cook their meals and pass a few days.

XX

SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

DISPUTES arise as the inevitable consequence of living as neighbours in a settled community in which individuals possess private property. Men quarrelled over women and wealth. Want and plenty led to other mischief within the same village. When no person of authority was available to act as arbiter the disputes continued. Before a system of law was obtainable custom and practice decided the cases of friction. Those who sat in judgment were the wise men. Disputes may arise over very trivial matters and women figure mostly in them. The Sinhalese women air their grievances with their neighbours in a most profuse flow of abusive language rising from a slow intermittent effusion to a loud screaming. There is no rhyme or reason. Offended dignity prompts such outbursts. One party or person tries to emulate the other. And the contest of obscene elocution continues until one feels satisfied, becomes weary or is chased away by men. The men seldom participate in these. But where men do, the dispute ends for the day by one party stabbing the other with a knife.[1] The case ends in the Courts.

The ancient system of settling disputes, clearing misunderstandings and detecting crimes by a reference to the power of the divine moral justice still prevails and is even today resorted to by the Sinhalese. Under this class may be included the threat, curse, ordeal and oath. It is an appeal to one's conscience through a sense of fear from the unknown divine powers who are believed to punish the transgressor. The innocent are believed to survive unscathed. The confession always precedes the trial. The transgressors who go through the trial are supposed to suffer through life.

The curse in its variety of forms shares the common characteristics of a wish fulfilment combined with a punishment for failure. The prime expectation is the recovery of something lost or justice where an injustice has been done. With this end in view the final remedy of

1. Ceylon comes very high in the scale of crime, and it is strange that a Buddhist country should be so.

resorting to the curse is in fact indirectly brought to the notice of those suspected in a subtle manner. What the curser desires more than anything else is the recovery. Sometimes the curse is made without any vow or its fulfilment to any deity.[1] In certain cases a deity or "God Almighty" is requested to bear witness. But in the majority of cases vows are made and their fulfilment for a special deity is specified.

In its simplest form the curse is made spontaneously at the moment the wrong is committed by utterances such as "may the cobra sting you," "may the devil attack you," "may lightning strike you," "may all the seven lightnings kill you," "may God bear witness to the crime."[2]

In another form of the curse[3] the grievance is stated before a shrine or devale deity and a remedy is prayed for from the presiding power. In return for the satisfaction something is promised. The injured party may also curse in person before a lime tree. Something valuable is tied to the tree as a token of the vow which has to be redeemed at a specified place irrespective of its fulfilment. The curse is uttered regularly both morning and evening for three, seven, thirty or ninety days each time after self-purification. Another form of the curse is the recitation of a set of verses composed by a specialist[4] in the art. Although the verses are repeated in strict secrecy the suspected offenders are indirectly informed of the threat and allowed time to make amends. Not only the individual is condemned to suffering and annihilation but also his family and children are cursed.

In cases of a dispute a settlement may be arrived at if it is possible for the parties concerned to meet and abide by the oath.[5] The oath is resorted to in order to affirm a statement, sanction a contract and accept a decision by mutual agreement. An oath may be taken by swearing in the presence of, in contact with or reference to sacred books, salt, fire, paddy, tinkling ornaments, cotton, iron forge, Buddha, God, father, mother, wife or husband, family or eldest child. Of all these things the devale is the most popular venue for such demonstrations. Both parties must be present and swear to each one's innocence. No one dare swear falsely as the punishment would be terrible and suffering lifelong.

1. Often God Vishnu and Dedimunda of Alutnuvara and Kataragama are appealed to to mete out due justice.
2. *Naya kapiya, yaka gahapiya, hena gahapiya, hena hathakma wediya, deyyo sakki* along with the verbal expression sand is thrown into the air.
3. *Avalada, saapa, paligeneema.*
4. *Waskavi* are such verses. The cleverest composer of such verses was a person called Barana Ganitaya.
5. *J.R.A.S.* (*C.B.*) 1873, Pt. 1, p. 5 by B. F. Hartsborne.

The ordeal is another form of settling disputes. This practice finds occasional observance even today. The chief object achieved is the proof of one's innocence. The accused or suspected person volunteers or is forced to undergo the ordeal, by dipping the hand into a vessel of boiling oil,[1] or a box containinga live cobra.[2] If the accused comes off unscathed he is proved innocent, if not he is condemned by those present or injured. One fact must be recorded in this connection. One can always refuse to undergo the ordeal. There are very few persons who are prepared to prove innocence by ordeal as the reasons are obvious. But a good number still resort to the oath, there being no immediate visible harm resulting therefrom. The very credulous are few. And the accused fears no public opinion which does not now strongly exist in any grade of Sinhalese society.

Any dispute that cannot be settled by mutual agreement or arbitration is an occasion for litigation. The inordinate desire of the Sinhalese for litigation is pursued with undying zeal throughout life and cases where men have ruined themselves on account of this vicious habit are legion. Win or lose the result is inevitable. It entails ruin from which one seldom escapes when one has commenced. Every little misunderstanding has to be settled in the Courts. The frivolity can hardly be imagined. Murders have been committed over an olive and whole fortunes have been lost in litigating over a tiny bit of land. Unfortunately, the prevailing legal system provides ample scope and no little facility for going to Courts. The peasant enjoys the novelty of it. He is boastful of his association with reputed lawyers in town. He gets a lot of fun by his visits to town. All the while he himself pays prohibitive sums to be humiliated in Courts and inconvenienced in public.

The official system of legal administration for the dispensation of justice has been imposed by the rulers and is based on British systems except for the Gansabha[3] or the Village Tribunal which is in essence an indigenous institution. The following are a list of such Courts :—The Village Tribunal, Magistrates' Court, District Court, Court of Requests, Supreme Court, and Appeal Court.

All simple cases are tried at the Village Tribunal by a President. The other cases are decided by a Magistrate or Judge. One may appeal to a higher Court and finally to the Privy Council in England.

1. *Mahavamsa* ; *Telakatahakavatthu.*
2. *J.R.A.S. (C.B.)*, 1873, Pt. 1, p. 12.
3. Small disputes are settled in the Village Tribunal.

Law and order are maintained by the State through these Courts. The enforcement of the law is in the hands of the Police who are assisted by the Vidanes.[1] the dispensing of the law rests with the judiciary. The latter co-operate with the Police.

1. The Vel-Vidane supervises the fields, the Police Vidane over the villages. The Vidane Arachchi ranks higher than the previous classes.

XXI

LABOUR

THE SINHALESE Society with its four-fold division into Brahamin, Prince, Merchant and Cultivator[1] left no provision for the ordinary worker. The functional basis of classification grouped the community into artisans and craftsmen. Even in those days the case for specialisation was fairly advanced. The menial work was specially entrusted to certain castes. Public work under such conditions was compulsory and was well known as *Rajakariya.*[2] All labour for state undertakings was requisitioned under compulsion and free of any payment. The British continued the practice till recent times and it was later converted to a poll-tax which in turn is being gradually given up for other taxes.

The maintenance of irrigation systems and roadways was a State business relating to the public interest. As such, those who stood to benefit directly found little room for complaint. Naturally, the people had very little grievance. But, when people were transported from place to place to work outside their sphere of interest such work meant taxation without benefits. A contemptuous meaning came to be attached to the functions under *Rajakariya.* It was this conception that influenced the Sinhalese to despise paid labour even under organised forms of state and private business. Other factors contributed in no small measure to the unpopularity of serving others for hire. The factors referred to are loss of freedom, absence from home, unhealthy stations, cruel treatment and regular hours of work and service under foreign masters who understood very little of the Sinhalese mentality.

Concentrated living within cities and towns is a modern tendency encouraging migration from the villages towards cities in search of employment, adventure and wealth. Despite the novelty of labouring under new conditions the Sinhalese are adapting themselves. But the Sinhalese are primarily cultivators working on a mutual aid basis

1. Bamunu, Raja, Welenda, Govi. Sudra must be added to this list.
2. Literally meaning work for the state or king without any remuneration. It was compulsory labour forcefully extracted on the pain of punishment and devoted to public or state requirements. A payment obtained exemption and naturally a stigma was attached to this type of manual labour.

according to which principle no payment is made. The chief man, the owner of the field and the highest respected noble would work in the field bathed up to the hips in mud. Today agricultural labour is engaged on a hire basis, the landless villagers being employed by the land owners. So naturally, sufficient number of men seemed available to carry on the work of cultivation. The fields and farms began to be neglected with the opening up of the land. Local labour became insufficient when large blocks of land were cleared in unhealthy areas. Indian labour was recruited as a solution. This led to the present labour problem and inter-state differences.

Consequently, Ceylonese labour, during recent years, has earned notoriety for laziness, lethargy and lack of responsibility. If it is admitted that the Ceylonese labourer is self-respecting and freedom loving then the above observation may be pardoned. If also, unquestioned submission to foreign dictation, if unqualified exploitation by foreign capital, if servile obedience to foreign authority are alone the requisite characteristics of decent labour, then it may be conceded that the Ceylonese are prone to such defects. As contrasted with the South Indian labourer who works under the worst inhuman conditions the Sinhalese love of independence, family attachment, self-respect forced him to revolt against the sad lot of the estate labourer.[1]

The social organisation of the Sinhalese peasantry was totally opposed in spirit and function to the capitalist system as contemplated by the early planters of the Island. The labourer of today is primarily an independent small holder who has been virtually ejected from his ancestral property. Those who still possess a fragment of that land work it and live on it. However, his sense of ownership is present at all times. No free men worked for hire. That was the duty of slaves. Is it then surprising to expect the Sinhalese to refuse to labour on newly planted cultivations of foreign proprietors who themselves ejected them from their ancestral property which are now the very estates on which they are expected to toil for hire. The crux of the Ceylonese labour problem is this subconscious antagonism combined with the horrors of early treatment meted out to labourers.

The life of the community has changed. Communications and transport have been made quick and easy. Towns have sprung up displaying wares of foreign make attractive and tempting. Economic system has altered. All these afford tempting prizes for the unhappy,

1. See the early reports on estate labour. These give the treatment meted out and the foreign attitude. Later labour laws were introduced but still the conditions, though far improved are not too bright.

discontented and ill treated folk in the villages. The movement is for a migration from the village[1] to towns in search of new jobs, trades occupations and wealth in an unknown atmosphere. The psychological bias against the labour in general is changing fast. The ancient loyalties and conservative ideas still prevail. But the threat of sheer starvation has supplied the necessary urge to abandon the family group and sever the family bonds even for short periods. The emotional attachments and ceremonial occasions still compel the members to meet often. But for such emotional impediments the Ceylonese are prepared to labour under conditions that are self-respecting and fair.

Among the Sinhalese a system of labour on the basis of mutual aid[2] is obtainable in agricultural and other seasonal activities relating to individual undertakings. The members of the village joined forces in cases of communal activities. The reasons that led to such co-operation are mutual advantage and goodwill. Great constructional undertakings like building tanks, temples and dagobas benefitted the public directly and the state indirectly. Occasional labour involving assistance at casual requirements, feasts, ceremonies and festivals is supplied by the neighbours as a vicarious responsibility and an obligatory duty. No cash payments enter into such cases. Payment in kind or help otherwise rendered is sufficient gratification.

Is it little wonder then to find the Sinhalese reluctant to work as labourers on Government or commercial undertakings such as road construction, irrigation and plantations. In the past such work was despised and rejected. No attempts were made to educate the labouring classes, improve their lot and offer them better and attractive terms, as an immense source of untapped cheap human labour was available in the neighbouring continent of India. South Indian labour was considerably cheaper and extremely easier of management. When the initial experiment proved satisfactory from the point of view of the Government and the proprietory planter annual requirements were indented for like any other imported commodity. The Ceylonese helped to tide over the difficult periods of clearing jungle preparatory to plantation of crops or construction of roads. But they refused to forsake their loyalties and leave home for long continuous periods to work and suffer in the inhospitable jungles where dangers from wild animals, fear of

1. The Southern Province is famous for sending out such pioneers to other parts of the Island and even outside the Island to places like South Africa, India, Burma, Siam and Malaya. Galle and Matara are the two chief centres of emigration. The chief reasons are inferior social position, loss of public confidence, loss of private property, independence and adventure.

2. *Attam.*

disease and merciless treatment awaited them. The women refused to accompany the men. This made matters more difficult.

The reports of the conditions of labour in the early eighties provide unpalatable reading matter. The Indian labourer was treated no better than a dumb creature. Those of them who survived the painful period of service returned unfit to live any longer. But new bands continued to pour in until the population of certain districts[1] became more South Indian than Ceylonese. Temporarily the labour problem seemed solved. With the progress of time conditions began to improve in slight measure. The Government and the planter were satisfied. Neither had the vision nor the foresight to anticipate the present labour problems. The Government in the early years did not understand the psychology and the social organisation of the Ceylonese. The planters did not care. With the gradual change of the economic systems came the amelioration of the labour conditions. Labour laws were introduced and implemented by the Department of Labour. The Ceylonese realised that one fruitful source of employment was being denied to them and also neglected by them. And during recent years there has been a heavy demand for employment as labourers of any description. But the planters have naturally turned a deaf ear. When everything else seemed to fail they propounded the fantastic theory that the Sinhalese are lazy, temperamentally unsuited for labour and life on the estates. This recent declaration runs counter to all established anthropological principles.

But the writer has heard from the responsible officers of the Labour Department that the theory is the deliberate fiction of a capitalist imagination for strengthening the case for continued employment of imported labour. The available evidence testifies to the wonderful adaptability, endurance, and suitability of the Sinhalese labourer. His capacity for work is greater. His intelligence is higher. He is not so timid and reacts to iniquitous treatment. Under humane treatment his response is favourable.

Domestic labour has not been organised or systematised. There prevail the evils of the ancient system and the modern. On account of this fact Ceylon has earned an international reputation for child slavery. Actually the term slavery is a misnomer. There are cases of cruel treatment but no system of slavery. The subject may be dealt under

1. Census reports of Ceylon.

three headings :

1. Child adoption.
2. Youth employment.
3. Prostitution.

Labour is the direct answer to poverty. It is a means of keeping starvation out of homes. Labour that is prompted by sheer necessity at the sub-human level may be exploited illegally and immorally. The subjects of such exploitation are lured from the Sinhalese villages where poverty and malaria take heavy toll of life and sap the vitality of the people. Nevertheless the birth-rate[1] is high and all the members cannot be provided for and fed, if the parents die before maturity of their offspring. The helpless children become the wards of an aged aunt or uncle. In a good many instances these superfluous children are exchanged for a monetary consideration or handed over to the care of wealthy families where they are promised an education, training in some vocation and a job if they turn out to be good. The age of adoption is between five and twelve years.

From the time of employment the children are expected to perform odd jobs. Heavy toil is also entrusted to them. Regular hours of work, rest, sleep and food are denied. They find no time for play, childish enjoyments that are thought essential for the master's children become non-essentials for them. New clothes, special foods, sweets and delicacies remain objects of sight. Neither the children nor the masters know what is expected of them. They are beaten and punished severely for stealing, lying and idling. Everything is supposed to be done in the interests of the wards. Under such conditions is it any wonder that a child loses interest in life, becomes morose and refuses to develop normal faculties for the good of self or society. The children attend no school nor are they instructed at home. Attempts are made at proselytization and conversion to Christianity takes place.

The aged aunt, uncle or the parents then begin to visit the child who once had none to care. They come in the expectation of taking away the child's earnings and not the child. But the unhappy ward yearns to return home as the visit brings back memories of home and all that is dear. All manner of excuses are put forward to withold any payment and keep the child. But the visitor persists in his request. Finally something is paid and he is sent away. But the death of a relative, illness, alms-giving or a special occasion are patent excuses for the return of the visitor to request a further contribution on the assurance

1. The average number for a village family is about seven.

that the child may be retained for work until death as it has no one really interested.

It must, however, be mentioned that in exceptional cases the children are kindly treated, educated, provided for and finally given in marriage. This system of child adoption for work reminds one of the ancient method where the child of a family living on the estate or village is brought up together with the children of the family. At no stage is the identity of the new-comer missed. But he is never kept out of mind. But the tragic suffering, tyrranous persecution and painful ill-treatment to which the majority are doomed offer redemption only in a run-away escape into the unknown world at large. The general public and the state can improve these conditions if their minds are seriously so inclined. It may be difficult since the spirit of the ancient system has vanished leaving the body degenerate. But the spirit can be reintroduced with a new orientation and a useful body revived.

The adult males and females find domestic service an easy avenue of employment since it involves neither skill nor hard labour. The house boys, house maids, cook-women and other aged folk come within this class. The ayahs, motor car drivers and cooks may be included in the skilled labour class. Domestic service in Ceylon requires no training and there is no organisation to train or recruit the employees. There are a few so called servant agencies whose credentials may be doubted. The servant classes are employed and discontinued at one's will. The wages are low. Social amenities are denied them. No form of insurance during sickness, old age or disablement and unemployment is obtainable in their case. Today is as uncertain as the morrow. Cheap labour itself may be the cause of this sorry state. The disinterestedness of the state also helped to continue the evil.

In any society woman's chief attraction is on account of her sex, which factor involves her in awkward relations with other members of her society. The migrations of women lured by the bright prospects of urban domestic service help to maintain an institution of prostitution. It is a well organised underground activity conducted both by night and day. The traffic in women continues under various pretexts. The procurers play the role of guardians, aged relatives or are actually uncles or aunts, cousins or relations. Disappointed lovers, deserted wives, frivolous ayahs and damsels absconding from home are enticed to serve in houses of ill-fame either with their knowledge or by inducements. But the criminal practice of bringing innocent young maidens from rural villages to towns where they are literally sold for money to

prostituting institutions where rich pleasure seekers initiate them into the tempting mysteries of the sexual act is undermining the morals and health of rustic society. When once a woman finds her way to one of these houses no amount of protests will induce the promoters to release the woman. It cannot be done since the procurers have been paid in advance and this money must be earned before disposing of the women. Desertion remains the only solution. But some take to the new life as a matter of course as it affords more comforts, independence and a new way of life. Time heals the early wounds and the women enter into the spirit of the illicit enjoyment until disease and ill-health enforce their redemption. Henceforth such persons lose their premium and change from place to place. They dare not go back to the village. They are thrown on the street or cater to a less careful and poorer class in the city itself until disease kills them.

The march of civilization involves changes in the social organisation and system of human relations. Such changes become radical, drastic and novel under an alien form of government professing a different culture pattern. A new sense of values pervades every sphere including labour. Some duties which were once considered respectable now become undignified. People become reluctant to undertake some forms of labour and if other sources of replacement are conveniently available these are tapped. Such duties were scavenging, conservancy, public works and estate labour. Change of economic conditions coupled with hardships of unemployment and spirit of nationalism force the hand of man to accept duties which may have been once spurned. New conceptions of the right of the worker and the theories about the dignity of labour overcome the difficulties attendant on the change. Once psychological prejudice and social stigma are removed all labour remains dignified.

XXII

GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS

THE AMOUNT of leisure available and the manner of utilising it provide a fair index to the economic self-sufficiency of a people. Leisure is as essential for cultural development and artistic efflorescence as genius to create them. The greatness of a people is ensured when these two factors prevail concurrently. Leisure is a pre-requisite of cultural advancement at the hands of a vigorous race who are not idlers but seekers of ideals. Any such leisure must be combined with happiness and contentment during which moments of free living a race may give expression to the beautiful in thought, speech or action for the sake of satisfying the inner urge in man. Apart from such works of great merit and excellence the lighter side of his energy may be directed towards simple amusements and games as providing both expression and satisfaction.

Men's expression is determined and controlled by his environment. His amusements and games are therefore in conformity with his physical ability, mental make up and environmental pre-determination. The vocational colouring and racial genius are inherent in such activities.

At no point of time do man's mental faculties enjoy perfect rest. Sleep and work alike afford scope for mental pre-occupations which may devise ways and means of fulfilment either to benefit self and society or harm both. Leisure is in fact a potential danger if canalised in the wrong direction. Individual leisure may be spent in a variety of known and unknown ways but the leisure of a community is so devised as to take effect in a seasonal rhythm. Work and play are thus complementary and form a necessary rhythm in the cycle of life. Accumulated through ages and traditionally handed down from generation to generation are the ways of using leisure among the Sinhalese. Provision has been made for the entertainment of infants, children, youths and the aged and accordingly the activities may be confined within doors or without at night or during day.

One of the most pernicious ways of spending leisure and that the

result of disintegration of society is gossiping at centres where people congregate, viz., bazaars, road junctions and public places. There is a difference between the gossiping of aged people and the young in that whilst the former type is harmless the latter leads to intentional and deliberate misdemeanour. As a means of disseminating information in the village gossiping may serve some useful purpose but more harm than good results. Seldom do such discussions deal with subjects of a general public interest, thus denying to the public the strong and weighty weapon called public opinion.

The subject of gossip both constructive and destructive centres around sex, local incidents and strange happenings. Actually most matters pertaining to village life are subject to free discussion. Every participant contributes his bit of scandalous news, nothing escaping reference. There are other secret or private meeting places like regular haunts or clubs at which drinking alcoholic beverages, gambling and gossiping go hand in hand. Usually women find no place in these pastimes. They have their own way of gossiping as their inclination to do so even surpasses that of men. The village well and the common bathing place form the typical venue of female gossiping. Around the historic well are discussed many a secret love affair and much family scandal.

Lack of room precludes the possibility of a large number participating in indoor games. Nevertheless the games provide for the participation of many. In most cases no definite number like eleven or fifteen is fixed. When an odd number want to split up into two sides without leaving out any present one member from a side may be allowed another turn[1] in addition to one's own. Most of the games under the section indoor games are meant for females and children. Men are of course not excluded. During nights and specially during the rainy season men, women and children spend long hours near a fire asking riddles, relating stories, legends and myths. There are specialists who are usually the old men—grandfather or an uncle. Family friends are also admitted into this circle. The women are clever at riddles in which branch many a contest ends in victory to women.

All human exercises intended for passing leisure hours combine play and amusement in such a manner as to elude at times the point at which the distinction between the two could be detected. Further interest is created at times by infusing a spirit of gambling which appeals to the adventurous instinct of man. It may thus be possible to convert any game

1. The idea of one member representing both sides also prevails. But the commoner practice is to admit one person to repeat the performance. This imaginary person is called a *Sunga*.

into a gamble for stake. The simplest indoor amusements are the games played with digits.[1] A variety of such games are still extant. At a certain stage the digits may be replaced by sticks.[2] Interesting as it may appear this game is adapted to detect thefts. Then there are the string games[3] where apparent knotting and untying are the chief pastimes underlying. Here certain vocational actions are also thrown in to relieve the monotony (*e.g.*) sawying. "Picking stones"[4] or large seeds indulged in for the sake of amusement is in principle the same although many provincial variations exist. It is very popular with girls. A number of board games[5] are even today popular specially in the uplands. Others are fast disappearing. All these are indulged in during national festivals like the Sinhalese New Year. How many of these are of Indian origin it is not easy to tell. But this much is certain and that is that a semi-religious connexion with Pattini has been manifest in some at least of these games. Perhaps the basis or origin of most may be found in agricultural pursuits of the people. In all these games a board[6] and counters are the only requirements. The counters are usually natural seeds or natural objects. Pretty little cowries are used to obtain the scores which may be marked by different tokens. Whilst the back of the cowry is not counted as a score in the lowlands it is counted in the uplands. This is probably a confusion. Of recent popularity are the following board games which are indulged in by the middle and upper classes. These are drafts, chess, carrom, ping-pong, billiards, etc.

The children's outdoor games[7] appear to be free of any gambling possibilities. On the other hand in them a spirit of adventure, search and discovery predominates. Besides, these pastimes appear to impart a preliminary training and knowledge of the arts and crafts and professions of the society. These are imitations of manly activities if nothing more. The list is not exhaustive but here are some: *Hengi-muttankeliya, Eluvan elleema, Mewara sellama, Bin kundan neta-weema, Kema piseema, Velandama, Geval theneema, etc.*

1. *Engili elleema* is detecting the nominated finger.
2. *Irata elleema* means detecting the nominated stick.
3. *Nool geta*, cat's-cradles.
4. *Gal keteema* or *Dorana keteema.*
5. *Olinda keliya, Dolaha keliya, Pahada keliya, Panchi keliya* (*Kavadi*).
6. The play boards are beautifully carved and preserved as family heirlooms. A cloth may be used with the diagrams or the diagram may be drawn on the ground. The name of the game indicates the counters used.
7. Folk songs of the Sinhalese—de Silva and Malalasekera.

The outdoor games[1] apparently of a more vigorous nature are intended to afford physical exercise specially for the young. Of these some are ball games like marbles. Others in this group are : *Ekuli, Buhu, Gudu, Kundu, Kalli, Katti (Masop), Lee keli.* Two others, viz., *Porapol* and *An-edima* are semi-religious games connected with the cult of Pattini.[2] A number of European games have been introduced and found popular favour with the middle and upper classes. These are chiefly played in English schools. The list includes : hockey, cricket, tennis, soccer, rugger, net ball, basket ball, rounders and volley ball. Athletics and swimming are also being introduced into more and more schools. Other popular amusements like giant wheel and swings[3] may be seen in circuses or carnivals.

As remarked earlier the most innocent form of amusement can be conducted with stakes attached to it. An added interest is thereby infused. This helps every person on each side to put forth his best effort. The stakes need not necessarily assume the form of a monetary payment but may be any payment in kind. But almost invariably a cash payment is agreed upon as the most convenient medium. As such an over anxiety to win leads to disputes arising from differences of opinion even among the best of friends and members of the same family. Some disputes end in bitter quarrelling and fatal stabbing cases. The indoor gambling games conducted purely on such a basis are : *Moonu wehima, Messanta salli thibeema, Gadol kireema, Keta geseema* and *Kadadasi geseema.* Many card games that have assumed a local name are played. These are : *Booruwa, Baby, Pomme,* Three Card, *Hathwasiya (Ralahamy), Omi and Ajutha.*

Outdoor gambling games are sometimes the same as those played indoors, but the following are indulged in outdoors, viz., *Wala kaju, Wala kos, Wala salli, Irata salli, keta geseema,* cards and lottery draws. But by far the most popular of all sports at the present day is horse racing where both rich and poor alike gamble in public in a legalised institution called the race course. Races are run throughout the year and no festival attracts more votaries of all castes, creeds and colour than these meetings. Many have ruined their fortunes and themselves by visiting the course too often. The plight of the poor race goer is pathetic. He goes to make money and returns having lost even the little he had. But he goes again and again at any risk.

1. Ludovici, Leopold—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. V, 1870–71, pp. 17, 33, 39, Sinhalese games.
2. Practically the whole village is represented except the women who do not participate but watch near by. Also *J.R.A.S.*, 1873, Pt. 1, p. 17.
3. A variety of local swings may be still seen e.g., *Lanu unchillawa, Roda, Kathuru unchillawa.*

Sinhalese literature, cloth paintings and temple art have preserved sufficient evidence illustrating the Sinhalese aptitude to indulge in blood games. The angam clothes and the wall and ceiling paintings of upland medieval temples preserve to this day the impressions of such contests in a real manner according to the canons of indigenous drawing. Wrestling (*mallawa pora*) not only between human beings but also between men and beasts seems to have been a popular pastime.

Buffalo fighting is an annual event seen during national festivals. It may be witnessed in the upland areas still. Two of the sturdiest bulls are matched in a field and the crowds watch the struggle as one beast charges and butts the other until one is disabled or withdrawn, owing to bleeding injuries. But the present day public opinion is against blood games.

Elephant contests are also similarly arranged but these are elaborate affairs of a more terrifying nature. Seldom are such contests staged today.

Cock-fighting has been suppressed by law. A secret contest is sometimes arranged in a village. Certain districts[1] appear to have won popularity on account of such contests. The pastime seems to have been indigenous and the Sinhalese have practised it even prior to the arrival of Malays who are experts at this game.

Many other amusements afford pleasure during leisure hours in creating a diversion from the monotony of life. The large rope swings provide thrills combined with exercise. The playing of the *rabana* is sweet to a villager but to the rest it creates a lot of noise only. The village belles revel in playing the rabana. Puppet shows are rarely seen. But a peripatetic band may put up a show at which the whole village gathers. Theatrical performances of a crude type may sometimes be seen as works of art or dramatic expression.[2] These do not rank high but in the villages these are enjoyed by the rich and poor alike. In this connection demonological performances[3] may also be mentioned as they afford in no little measure ample pleasure, consolation and enjoyment to a large majority. Chariot races and elephant races are known but are not popular.

1. Kukul Korale in the Ratnapura District is a place in point. There are many legends relating to cock-fighting.
2. *Kolam, Nadagam, Nataka, Netima.*
3. *Bali, Tovil, Yakun, Netima.*

XXIII

FOLK LORE

SINHALESE FOLK-LORE is rich in the wealth of information stored through centuries in a society developed in close association with its natural environment. The cultural pattern betrays the inherent traits characteristic of an agricultural people. The culture-complexes bear close similarity to the Indian prototypes since the remote origins are the same. Such a lore preserved among the ordinary simple village folk orally transmitted in family succession seldom finds expression today since, according to the requirements of modern society, the national lore finds no place. Hence folk-lore has undergone much change, lost its intrinsic value, become corrupt and fallen into disuse. Such a course is inevitable. Yet much has been preserved and escaped complete extinction.

It is needless to stress the true importance of a study of folk-lore in the renaissance of a national culture. It is through such a body of cultural streams that the source of a people's genius can be retraced. It is in these that the pulse of the people throbs as in folk-lore the real urge of the national consciousness found the sweetest and most exquisite expression. Folk-lore, therefore, constitutes the sum total of popular feeling translated into shape and form through individual expression in popular voice.

Folk-lore forms such an integral part of the daily life of the people that it is difficult to treat the subject fully as a separate factor. Nevertheless,for purposes of this survey it is proposed to do so for convenience. But it is well to remember that every act, every decision and every-undertaking of a villager is greatly if not completely influenced almost at every stage by the mass of lore so readily felt and available to every one.

As the thoughts and beliefs of a people are seriously affected by a body of popular lore the worship of deities belonging to that lore provides natural emotional satisfaction. Many gods and goddesses are known by name.[1] Many exist in the realm of the imagination. Still others are

1. De Silva, W. A.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. 28, No. 73, p. 14.

respected. Buddhism, both *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* is mixed up with other beliefs. Gautama and Maitriya Buddha are treated as gods of superhuman power. Another omnipotent, and omnipresent conception of a supreme godhead finds universal expression. He is appealed to as a god especially in times of injustice and distress. Next follow the devale deities whose importance varies according to districts. These are Saman, Kataragama, Vishnu, Natha and Pattini. The Goddess Pathini is the only female conception of godhead in the whole pantheon of popular religious belief among the Sinhalese.

The People of the Wanni Districts believe in local deities such as *Dedimunda, Aiyyanar* (*Ilandari deyyo*). A host of Bandara gods enter into the popular beliefs among the upland areas. Kuda Deyyo is the guardian deity of cattle. The regional gods are also worshipped. In addition there are the sun god, moon god and the earth god. Of these *Handa hami* (moon) and the *Polova Mahikanta* (earth) are female conceptions. The trees and mountains, wind and rain, river and sea form the abodes of phenomenal deities.

The mode of worship is by genuflections before the image of the deity combined with circumambulation around the shrine. Representations of the deities are set up in abodes specially prepared for their worship. Worshipful prostration by clasping the hands before the forehead can be reckoned as the common method of respect. The attributes of the worship are the offering of flowers and leaves, milk rice, valuables, precious metals, images and cloths, burning of incense and lighting lamps. The worship before the Buddha or relics associated with the Buddha legend amounts to nothing more than veneration and remembrance. It is a commemorative act devoid of any expectation consequent to the performance. The worship of the lesser deities specially the natural phenomenal deifications betray an inherent expectation in return for the worship which appears to savour of a sacrificial fulfilment.

In all undertakings of a domestic, social and religious significance custom ordains a certain regular mode of procedure in all actions. On ceremonial occasions the ritual must be strictly observed as otherwise any unforeseen act of omission or commission may lead to disastrous results. Every village and in fact every family has its own confidential specialist in ritual. Actions implicitly or explicitly approved by the village society obtain sanction as it were by the performance of a set ritual as otherwise the binding force of a traditional sanction may be denied. Such denials amount to a public censure and the party or parties

concerned avoid the ritual. It is the conservative element who are the guardians of custom and law. This same element attempts to perpetuate the customs despite all obstacles. At times the ritual observance becomes not only a perfect inconvenience but also an ordeal. Nevertheless, the impression created repays the suffering and infuses sufficient confidence for success. The whole village bears witness to the event thereby affording enough publicity and goodwill. Custom and ritual are maintained as much owing to the requirement of society as to the fulfilment of beliefs.

Superstition steps in at this stage viewing with strong disapproval not only any violation of a set formula but also innovations of the old. Thus superstition[1] helps to maintain and continue unchanged the custom and ritual of the village unit by acting as a guide and check in speech, thought and action. Spitting out thrice removed the evil effects of speech. It is not good to say that a child is bonny and healthy, fruits are big and crops are bountiful even if such statements are true. Common speech must be avoided in the jungle and the fields. Special words must be used on such occasions. Wild animals and venomous reptiles should not be referred to by their common name. A descriptive epithet must be used instead. Cooked foods or oily substances must not be carried without a piece of lime, iron, or charcoal. The scratching of the left palm is for getting wealth and that of the right for its disposal. When one's eye twitches it denotes a coming event. Irritation of the nose and sneezing denote that someone is thinking of one. Never build a house when the wife is pregnant as it would endanger delivery. The offering of mustard oil facilitates delivery. One's garments get torn, bitten by vermin or burnt when misfortune[2] is imminent. The birth of four sons in succession is not good. The planting of certain trees in the garden, the infestation of bees and beetles on the roof denote the fall of the chief of the house. One must avoid the eating of flesh and fish. If one eats twin fruits one will get twins. If one gets a sty one will get a sister. The crowing of a crow and the cat licking its paw are ominons of the arrival of a guest. It is believed that superstition in most cases helps to eliminate evil by forewarning the person who is likely to suffer.

1. Jayatilaka, S.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. II, Pt. 2, No. 24.
2. It is the popular belief that a solar or lunar eclipse takes place when Rahu—a demon—grasps the sun or the moon in its mouth. This purely natural phenomenon is considered very ominous and portends universal misfortune for mortals. During an eclipse the Sinhalese peasants still turn about with sticks and clubs with the idea of over-powering Rahu and releasing sun and moon from being swallowed by him.

Luck[1] and ill-luck are therefore controllable and avoidable factors. At least these could be avoided to a great extent if the ominous events and signs synchronising with the misfortune could be intelligently and properly interpreted and understood. But certain misfortunes must be considered as the inevitable result of a previous *Karma*. How else could a villager explain the sudden prosperity of one as well as the sudden adversity of another. There are lucky days, sights, omens and moments as well as unlucky ones. Some omens are lucky for certain things but unlucky for others. Forgetting to take something when setting out of the house is generally unlucky but specially lucky when going out to gamble. Friday is bad but Thursday is lucky. A corpse is an unlucky sight whilst a maiden is lucky. The screeching of a jackal or a "keralla bird" at the moment of leaving home is ill-fated whilst the crowing of a cock is considered fortunate. Early morning is luckier than the afternoon to set out on a journey.

As luck can be induced so ill-luck can be avoided and *vice versa*. The elaborate process has been already described under *bali* and demonology. Magic may also be taken into consideration. The belief of the people in such matters is as prevalent as ever before despite modern education and training. Perhaps the lack of science helps the perpetuation of an ancient system which if nothing more explains the phenomena that yet elude scientific explanation. The place of magic in Sinhalese society is clear. The inquisitive human mind finds ample scope in this for revenge, consolation, confidence and hope. Therefore magic fulfils a need that will exist in the Sinhalese society for years to come.

Mantras and *yantras* constituting charms which may be amulets or verbal utterances expressed in the face of danger may be reckoned a branch of magic. In all such cases long stereotyped formulae are committed to memory for secret utterance in accordance with a rigid ritual. Some charms consist of short passages whilst others run to pages of ola mss. Certain charms are supposed to be effective in winning love, protecting one's person against man, demon, beast, unknown dangers, impending misfortunes and magic. Their potency at inducing good fortune is also admitted. The curative effect rests on magical performances combined with medical treatment.

The success of medicines depends to a certain extent on the elimination of all known and unknown dangers arising from magic as well as demonological and planetary evil dispositions. Magic and medicine

1. *Vasanava* or *hetuva*. Fortune may be the due share of one in this world. Most people believe this to be the just reward of past good deeds. Some interpret it as mere chance.

therefore go hand in hand. The medical prescriptions are preserved as set formulae[1] in traditional schools of *Vedaralas* and transmitted in pupilary succession. Plant lore[2] plays the chief role as the medicines consist of herbs. The system has been evolved by trial and error. The practice of the system also requires that the people possess a clear knowledge of the herbs for the collection of the herbs and the production of the medicines. The people have immense faith in the indigenous system and the psychological satisfaction predisposing the treatment enables a quick remedy within a limited sphere of effectiveness.

The cradle songs and nursery rhymes constitute a peculiar class of folk-lore. Though, generally, not intended to convey any coherent expression of thought, the rhymes by their sweet sounds and happy thoughts produce a sleepy tune easy to render. These are popular in every home and could be heard throughout the length and breadth of Ceylon usually sung by mothers and little girls looking after babies. Riddles may be in the form of question and answer in verse or prose. It is during moments of leisure when friends and relations meet that riddles are asked by way of amusement in passing weary dull hours at home or in the field. The subject matter is drawn from the environment of the peasant. Much useful information necessary for the life obtaining in the rustic home has been preserved. It may be assumed that some at least serve as aids to the memory for preserving useful lore which otherwise may be lost by neglect.

Proverbs[3] of the Sinhalese are now only commonly used in the villages where Sinhalese speech finds undiluted expression. Some of these home truths are very ancient and belong to a society much older than the present village. The general reference is to an agricultural system. A good many have become idioms and have assumed literary Sinhalese forms. Others are pithy but crude and hence do not find literary or decent mention. Nevertheless these are also still in use. One may therefore find very useful matter in proverbs for studying the psychology of the Sinhalese.

Yet another class of narratives comprising stories, legends, myths, and fables is met with. These are mostly prose compositions interspersed with verses. Some of these verses may be the archaic kernel around which the prose narrative is woven according to the retentive power, expressive ability and narrative charm of the story teller. Everyone

1. De Silva, W. A.—*J.R.A.S.*, 1913, Vol. XXIII.
2. De Silva, W. A.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XII, No. 42.
3. De Zoysa, L.—*J.R.A.S*, Vol. VII, Pt. 1, No. 23, 1881 ; Vol. V, 1870-1, pp. 25, 135.

is not equally gifted at the art of story telling A great deal of individuality enters into a story. For this reason no story is related in exactly the same manner. Variations in the form of modifications, additions, deletions depend on the skill of the narrator. Accordingly the same story may differ in detail whilst agreeing in essential features depending on the district and narrator. The Sinhalese make no distinction between the four categories of story but call all by the same term, *i.e. katha*.

The story is the ordinary village tale woven around the peasant and his wife, the main theme being their love affairs, affections and paramours. These simple tales contain interesting village information, exciting dramatic situations, philosophy of life and rude rustic humour[1]. The construction of the story is the same. The story drags on with one or more stories included in the body of the main theme. The main narrative begins and ends in the same manner. The legend[2] contains historical information couched in a mysterious setting of divine and human environment. Some of the incidents may be imaginary whilst others may be true. Fiction and fact are so beautifully painted as to render almost impossible the separation of the fact from fiction. It may be that what was once considered legendary may later be proved to be true. The field of demonology provided the most fertile scope for the creation of the legend as the innumerable, deities, *yakkhas and raksas* and *nagas* with their hosts of attendants necessarily had to assume divine or semi-divine origin in order to impress the human credulity. It is therefore in the *bali*, *tovil* and *kodivina* that the legend plays the chief role.

The myth[3] supplies another need of society. It acts as a code of morality and offers an explanation for such phenomena as the origin, creation and destruction of the world, incest and taboo custom and ritual. Myths are rare. Yet a few could be detected in popular currency even at the present times.

The fable is a didactic tale which attempts to teach a moral by example. The characters that figure are mostly animals that act and speak. Human beings are also introduced. The moral is stated at the end of the story. The *Jatakas* may be included in this class but these teach a religious moral by way of a story. Very few that could be called

1. The Sinhalese ironically call themselves "fools clever at eating oil cakes," *Sinhalaya modaya, kevun kanta yodaya*. Also there are two villages Tumpane in Kandy District, and one village in Kalutara District where the people are popularly said to be very foolish and all the silly stories are credited to these people.

2. Legend of Kuveni.

3. See Article 14 Vol. 43-1943 Jan.-Feb. in Man by Wijesekera.

pure Sinhalese fable may be found as it is possible that the Indian influences with the overwhelming popularity of the *Jatakas* would have replaced the older indigenous element even if there were any current at the time of the Indian cultural impacts.

Folk poetry[1] by itself forms a subject big enough for a number of volumes. Its fascination and appeal, inherent charm and beauty, simplicity and originality fail to be appreciated by lack of sympathetic understanding. A proper analysis would reveal a number of illuminating features. There is a *Vedda* strain in some of the songs. Mother love as well as love of mother finds beautiful expression. The family circle is not altogether left out. Early magical and religious conceptions may be observed. But humour and irony are not wanting. The dramatic element prevails. Food appears to be a vital subject. The human aspect of such references to family affection, girls and women, mother, husband and wife emerges from among the various themes. Nature represented by animal, bird and plant life on the one hand, natural phenomena, guardian deities and abstract conceptions on the other, evoked simple but original poetry. Folk poetry springs out of the supreme joy and emotion of the people for their supreme joy and emotion—to lighten the tedium of many laborious functions; to accompany the music and dance; to sustain interest in sport and fun; to offer merit and to grant blessings poetry and song help the society of men. According to such a division folk poetry may be grouped under lullabies games, sports, dance, *tahandi*, *savdam*, *vannam*, *tala*, labour, agriculture, magic and religion.

Music and dance are the inevitable concommitants of religious observance, enjoyment during leisure and expression of the innermost human emotion. The Sinhalese music and Sinhalese dance as found today may be survivals of those elements that prevailed among the ancient masses. The finest flowers have faded leaving only the withered roots. The dance is known as Kandyan. The manner of movement and the bearing of the drum indicate a religious consecrational character in the origin of these arts. Both arts are preserved to this day in the families of the Nekati caste. In this connection may be mentioned the dance of the Rodiyas and Veddas which are very simple emotional expressions to a time-rhythm.

Dramatic art may be connected with music and dance. *Bali*, *Tovil*, *Kolam*, *Nadagam* and *Rukada* owe a little of their success to music and

1. Analysis of Folk Songs—*The Buddhist*, August, 1942, onwards by Wijesekera. De Silva, W. A.—*J.R.A.S.* Vol. XXIV, No. 68.

dance which heighten the dramatic effect. The peasant loves to witness such performances and enjoys them immensely since in these he sees the daily life in the village emphasised by ridicule or seriousness. Such shows take the place of the cinema. The Sinhalese realise such deep emotional situations not only in dramatic art but also in rites of a secular nature. The agricultural and other rites are performed with a devotion, earnestness and conviction that baffles the casual visitor. Agriculture being the chief mode of livelihood the Sinhalese peasant has correctly stressed the importance of ceremonial in the creation of the proper psychological background. Hence at every stage of agricultural undertakings a prescribed ritual is followed with scrupulous care.

The blessings of the regional deities, phenomenal deifications and gods are sought. In this list are also included the beneficient and benevolent ancestors who are worshipped in the form of spirits. Certain popular personages, and mighty kings are also worshipped. Such national hero[1] cults arise from hero worship continuing from the life of the individuals. In the upland districts the *Bandara devatas* are such conceptions of a specific local character which later came to be universally acknowledged in certain cases.

Another most interesting line of enquiry would be the study of Sinhalese place names.[2] Popular fancy has woven a mass of ancient and legendary detail referring to different historical phases of Sinhalese society. A good deal of information can still be gleaned from such names. The names have a characteristic way of origin in most cases. Nevertheless, a good deal depends on individual fancy. The rivers, mountains, forests, fields, hills, derive their name from a special feature of the object itself. Certain incidents are also associated with places or villages.

Nature in all its rich luxuriance, ample fertility and immense utility attracted study from the Sinhalese peasant. Trial and error, observation and experience, association and fear made him study, respect and dread nature specially its uncommon, massive aspect. This body of nature-lore played a conspicuous part in the life of the villager influencing his thoughts and life. Although he was overwhelmed by its immensity, its beauty and simplicity helped him in the struggle for life. As he had to draw his daily sustenance from the environment around him he had to develop a keen sense of observation, possess a fair knowledge of the weather, seasons, rains, floods. Thus the movements

1. King Dutugemunu and Mahasena are worshipped.
2. de Lanerolle, Julius—*J.R.A.S.* Vol. XXXI, p. 511.

of the sun, moon and stars came to be studied. The Sinhalese jungle folk do still show such a keen sense. In this process some of the lordly trees came to be worshipped. He studies the animal life[1] of the jungle as well. The behaviour and habits of animals, periods of mating and other details come in useful in the chase, as otherwise it would not have been possible to trap and kill animals with the limited weapons of offence. As the animals played a chief role in the Indian fables of which the *Jatakas* formed a majority certain animals came to be specially respected and even worshipped. In course of time a certain sanctity also came to be attached to the life of animals and this has survived up to modern times.

Games and amusements have been commented on in an earlier chapter. From the point of view of folk-lore these are important records. Apart from their value as means of spending useful leisure their intrinsic importance lies in the recorded preservation of other information. These belong to a society that existed years before and are therefore apparently out of place even in the remotest peasant society of today.

Dreams in a modern society are interpreted as the interplay of active and dormant reminiscences of the sub-conscious mind. The Sinhalese fervently believe in dreams as omens of coming events. They are always interpreted as influencing the future. On the subject of dreams many recorded Mss. are extant. These afford a dogmatic interpretation. Nevertheless the average peasant has acquired a fair knowledge in the interpretation of dreams as popularly understood. In such an understanding of dreams general agreement on the main facts prevails. But points of difference arise as regards details. A variety of predisposing factors condition dreams. Some of them are under and some beyond human control. Specific remedies are supposed to eliminate certain class of bad dream.

The classification of dreams has been known from ancient times. This very fact shows a stage of systematisation of the dream contents by a close analysis of the dreams experienced by a society which is different from the present. Therefore the interpretation applies to such a society as prevailed at the time of classification. A section of the present day society still faithfully believe in these interpretations. Dreams may be good, bad or ineffective. The classes of dreams are sexual, demonological, ominous, informative and casual. Under the class of sexual dreams are included a number of natural dreams, resulting in the

1. James W Knight—*J.R.A.S.*, 1883, Vol VIII.

release of sexual impulses leading to a necessary physiological function. The actions are attributed to two spirits entitled Mohini, an elusive female phantom of beauty who seduces men in dreams and Kalukumara, a handsome irresistible young prince who seduces women in dreams. The persons affected by such dreams pine and waste away spending restless nights under the spiritual spell. These visitations in dreams can be cured by resort to a set ritual.

Demons and other maleficient spirits may also inflict harm by appearing in dreams. Their influence on the whole induces illness. Prescribed remedies[1] are supposed to exist to ward off such visitations. The ominous dreams are portentous of danger, misfortune and death. These evil happenings may be averted to a great extent if the dream is kept to oneself. Should it be given out then it must be first divulged under a lime tree after making a vow. Bad dreams may be generally averted by purity of body and mind. Informative dreams constitute the bulk of the dreams. These are mere wish fulfilments and human desires. Someone appears in a dream and tells a hunter where game is plentiful, gives a clue to a lost article, indicates hidden treasures, directs an undertaking, offers advice and hints about a future event. Dreams of a casual nature dealing with quite a number of miscellaneous subjects are considered the result of a physical condition preceding the dream.

It is the common belief that certain facts, and objects are rarely dreamt of. If these are dreamt great good will be in store. Sun, moon and stars fall within this category. Death, accidents, broken teeth or limbs spell disaster. The opposite of what has been dreamt may happen is also a popular belief. It is always easy to find a set of events that may be correlated with the possible interpretation of a dream. Such a confirmation of the truth of a dream interpretation ensures the continuance of the firm belief in dreams. Fear and superstition strengthen the belief. A good dream infuses sufficient confidence stimulating action as much as a bad dream dissuades and frustrates.

1. These are connected with *bali* and *tovil*.

XXIV

PROCESSIONS AND PILGRIMAGES

It is not an uncommon sight to witness a procession or pilgrimage or such ritual event of a social or religious nature any day of the year in Ceylon. The business of the people is not to engage in processions or conduct pilgrimages as a full time pre-occupation. Nevertheless the society is organised with due consideration for and in respect of such ritual and ceremonial so that one is inter-linked with the other as a necessary component of the annual cycle. The rhythm is maintained by the annual and seasonal events that stimulate, prompt and revive interest in the life of the people. Hence it is that even the Sinhalese of the twentieth century find in these movements fun and enjoyment for the mind in spite of their superficial external trappings.

Custom and ceremonial are all the more forceful in a society that is superstitious in the extreme. In this respect the Sinhalese may be considered living in medieval times. The majority of their rites and ceremonies[1] are based on lunar calculations. As with ancient folk so with the Sinhalese the solar calendar hardly enters their calculation in arranging the programme of activities. They observe a lunar calendar. This is so even today. At the present time the date and time are reckoned according to the lunar observations but co-related with the prevalent solar system. The one and only solar feast is the Hindu and Sinhalese New Year commencing with the entry of the sun into the asterism aries.

Private events such as funerals, weddings, welcomes and receptions of an individual domestic nature are arranged on an auspicious day according to the lunar reckoning. As they may occur so unexpectedly these cannot be provided for. But for the social events of an annual recurring nature much ritual is involved. These have assumed the name of the lunar month such as Esala, Poson or Durutu perahera. The historic and grandest of them all is the Esala Perahera[1] of Kandy. Today it has assumed national, nay international proportions although the basic structure may have had a deeper popular origin. Reminiscences of an

1. LeMesurier, C. J. R.—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. VII, Pt. 1, 1881.

ancient fertility cult prominently feature on occasions combined with a purificatory perambulation. In pomp and ceremonial, glamour and majesty no annual socio-religious event could rival the Kandy Perahera. Its duration is three weeks, the first two being devoted to preliminaries. The peak of brilliance and the height of extravagance are reached during the last week which is called the Randoli Perahera. All other Peraheras associated with the devales have a perahera each taking the start from the Kandy Perahera. These are the Mahiyangana, Alutnuvara and Kataragama. The Kelaniya and Kotte Peraheras are attempts to revive or re-commence Peraheras that may have once been held. The Wesak and Poson Peraheras are religious events commemorative of historical happenings. The sporadic outbursts of religious devotion find expression in Pinkamas which are an irregular feature. These are religious occasions culminating in a grand-scale procession organised for the purpose of collecting funds for the local temple.

Festivals and fairs are commemorative feasts of bygone events some of which may be religious and others social. These helped the diffusion of ideas and their assimilation, since a variety of peoples assembled together on these occasions. The festivals are therefore enjoyable events today. The Dondra Fair held annually serves to interest the pilgrims returning from Kataragama. It is organised by the Sinhalese. And there is little doubt of its genuine antiquity. The Vel Festival is conducted and originated by the Hindus to commemorate a mythical victory of the God Subramaniam. The Wattala festival has a deeper background than the modern popular conception. It is perhaps the only feast where actual drinking, singing, dancing and eating can be witnessed. It remains a bloody feast under Christian patronage. The foremost votaries consist of the mechanic class of Portuguese Burghers whilst all other sections of the population except Mohammedans are also found. The Muslims stage an annual festival at Beruwala and Alutgama called Buhari. The little processional parties that roam the city streets under the name of " Jawsen " Hobson-Jobson have probably an Indian Muslim origin. The activities are concluded by a nocturnal demonstration of fire walking.

Pilgrimages absorb some attention from every Sinhalese and Tamil irrespective of their religious susceptabilities. To the ordinary Sinhalese peasant the innate urge to go on pilgrimage is irresistible. Probably it satisfies a necessary emotion that can only be fulfilled by a continuation of an ancient traditional custom of seeing and visiting places of religious worship. Those who cannot afford the means visit the

nearest temple. But the majority do manage to visit at least once in a life time the historical sites of religious association, the most popular of them being Anurdhapura, Polonnaruva, Tissamaharama, Sigiriya and Mihintale.[1] Most sites can be reached by rail or 'bus and car if not during the whole year at least during a part of it. But Sri Pada[2] still remains the common religious meeting place of Buddhist, Hindu and Mohammedan. Compensation is believed to be gained by the walking pilgrims over the motorist in so far as more merit accrues to the former and less to the latter. Once a site has been visited the strong desire is to revisit the same, and this at times during the season, becomes irresistible. St. Anne's at Madhu is a jungle shrine which also attracts pilgrims annually.

Custom and ceremonial engender the necessary force for the growth and spirited continuation of a society. The desire to continue to observe the ceremonial helps the development of self-respect and character. Although some points of the ritual may be too antiquated and be in conflict yet only a small fraction of the population are so disposed to foresake all the features of a ritual. Even the most educated are not yet psychologically ritual-free. Since the mental make up is inclined to be enriched and enlivened by ritual and ceremonial and since the mind is consoled and fed on such beliefs the Sinhalese make provision for pilgrimages in their annual cycle of activities.

As the Sinhalese society has not changed too drastically magic, ceremonial and religion have been interwoven with many social events. It may be difficult at times to detect where one begins and the other ends. The fusion is harmonious and long in use. But the people know and understand where and when one begins and ends.

The fairs, processions and pilgrimages are familiar events of village life. The organisation centres around village units. This gives rise to inter-village rivalries. Everybody puts on the best clothes and sets out to see and enjoy. Some of the funniest fashions may be observed on these occasions. The out of date styles, feet encumbered with shoes, powder laden faces and gaudiest colours remind the intelligent spectator of times gone by. But the rich and poor, believer and non-believer move together each trying to pick up something rich and strange at the bazaars that have sprung up for the occasion. Kelaniya pots or dolls, trinkets or cloth, beads and glass-ware, brass and copper ware, foods

1. The sixteen sites are recorded in a verse. See Bell, H. C. P.—Kegalle Report, p. 126 Also mentions the *Esala Perahera*.
2. This is a clear example of the origin and growth of sacred spots due to the association of miraculous power. The spectacle of the rising sun is a phenomenal feature unique in the Island as seen from the summit. It is an awe-inspiring sight which the original inhabitants could not have failed to reverence. This must be the origin of its sanctity apart from its later legendary association with the Buddha, Siva and Mohammed.

and delicacies are displayed and disposed of. The rich, curious and the ignorant, gaze, admire and buy.

The women get the maximum satisfaction and the highest thrill from these fairs as they possess the predisposing faith and devotion. The children love them. The fairs, processions and pilgrimages have played a wonderful role as centres of propaganda, fashion and distribution of different wares. They have fostered a spirit, of fellowship of faiths and a brotherhood of communities. Everyone on pilgrimage helps each other and readily serves one another. No distinctions of caste or religion, race or community enter the minds of men during ceremonial events of a social nature. These occasions afford the women an opportunity to display to sufficient advantage their beauty and even wealth. Above all, these festivals afford an outing which often is a rare privilege to Sinhalese damsels. But at the conclusion of the event the people return home tired physically, poor financially but satisfied emotionally.

In a place such as Ceylon where the diversity of interests enrich the variety of national and religious festivals adding colour to the harmony of life one still finds narrow sectionalism, mean caste prejudices and bitter communalism fostered by the political propagandists for selfish advantage.

The Buddhist sites annually visited by streams of pilgrims remind one of the days gone by. The oldest of them may be very ancient. The site itself may have continued as a place of pilgrimage even though the ancient religion changed for a later faith. It is not unlikely that Buddhism supplanted the older faith. Whatever it is, Kelaniya, Mahiyangana, Kataragama and Sri Pada may be some of such ancient sacred sites that persisted throughout the centuries despite the change of religion.

XXV

CULTURE CONTACT

THE RACIAL history of the Sinhalese preserves definite evidence of contacts with outside human groups at different stages of time. One common factor pervaded all such influences and that was colour. Although the racial groups differed in degree of cultural advancement and social organisation, religious outlook and psychological make-up these possessed a uniformity of colour. For these reasons the differences assumed no insuperable barriers for assimilation of culture and race. The contacts with European races were, however, of a different nature.

For the first time in their history the Sinhalese came in contact with an alien race who belonged to a different racial stock and possessed a completely different culture.

The sudden impact reacted disadvantageously for the Sinhalese and took them by surprise. The first impression created by the presence of the first landing party of the white man is clearly recorded in a Sinhalese historical work called the *Rajavaliya* written during the sixteenth century. The report runs thus :

> " An extremely fair race of men of surpassing beauty wearing iron jackets and iron helmets roam about the city of Colombo without rest for one moment in one place. Seeing them eat bread and grapes and drink liquor they said that they bite stone and drink blood. They pay one or two gold pieces for one fish or a lemon. The sound of their canon surpasses the peal of thunder on Mt. Yugandhara. The canon balls after travelling a number of leagues destroy rock fortresses."

It is clear from the above description that the white colour won admiration and the material culture overawed the Sinhalese. Naturally, fear of the unknown power paved the path for submission. This military superiority of weapons and armour coupled with a higher material advancement helped the white races to dominate the Sinhalese for nearly five hundred years. This dominating spirit and superiority of race added to the imperial pride that continued and prevails even

today. This psychological pre-disposition remains the root cause of many present ills obstructing the fusion of race and culture. Hence there ensued a culture conflict and racial animosity as a result of culture contact. The result of the impact of race and culture on the Sinhalese would have been far reaching and forceful enough even to have absorbed the national culture and eliminate the population. But to the advantage of the Sinhalese there remained an ancient culture with historical association that resisted the eclipse with all its force.

The materialisation of culture contacts operates through the mind more than through any other external channel. Their ways are so varied and yet subtle and the process so continuous that one cannot exhaustively enumerate all of them. But the subject may be dealt under main heads although one or all the factors may be active at any one moment. As far as the Sinhalese society and people are concerned the processes may be studied under the ways stated below : Two possible ways of culture contact are the visits of townsmen to the villages and the visits of villagers to towns. Colombo is a busy port where many people of different races live and carry on business each in its own quarter. The dress worn by them, the manner, and speech differ.

But the British subjects of European birth set the fashion. The Ceylonese imitated. When those people travel to the interior on business or pleasure they set up the same standards and put up the same show as in town. Such a mode of behaviour enhanced their reputation as people of Colombo. Their dress and speech, goods and external trappings, habits and manners name and food are copied in the most slavish fashion. The visitor from town is not only a disseminator of fashion but is also a displayer and unconscious advertiser of foreign articles of trade. He creates an interest and arouses the curiosity so as to compel the villager to venture out into such towns where the most marvellous things are said to be found. The white man is seen but not accessible. His power is felt but he does not move freely. His women folk[1] stand aloof. They do not in any way form an integral part of the village organisation except as patrons. Their business was to work, enjoy and make money for the foreign capitalist. At the same time they acted as agents of Imperial interests.

The Ceylonese in the village attempted to ape him but without much success. Hence there has grown up a class of Ceylonese contemptuously

1. Saar Johann Jacob—*J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XI, 1889. In his account mentions how strings were put through the ear flaps of the palanquin-bearers to prevent them from bolting specially when carrying white women.

known as "imitation Europeans." or "Black Whites" The tourist comes as a curious traveller with a definite interest. He does not count much. The merchants, brokers, agents and Chinamen have penetrated to the villages but their personal influence has been seldom felt. The government official living away from towns acts also as a potent source of culture dissemination.

The villager comes to town lured by wealth and attracted by the wonderful stories circulated by those who have returned. He comes on many occasions either to participate in fairs and carnivals or to see special objects. The occasions may be a special procession, Vesak night, visit of an imperial personage[1] or a national leader or death of a leader. He also visits as a matter of course the Colombo Museum and the Passenger Jetty, two places of free admission. The tall buildings, the large steamers, and the tram-car strike wonder. Many novel sights thrill him beyond imagination. All such material creations enhance the respect towards the white man and his government. The busy streets with the busy men amaze him. He loses his bearings, and his sense of proportion and returns completely taken up with the life, the people and the ways of the towns. The impressions taken back bear an influence in their subsequent affairs. The villager who works in the town enjoys the social amenities, exchanges views, benefits by modern inventions, listens to the radio, develops a political sense and returns not only a changed man himself but also a carrier of ideas. It is also in towns that a villager begins to develop a sense of defeatism owing to personal failures, gross injustices, and deliberate discrimination, novelties and inconveniences.[2] Unaccustomed to the bargaining methods and ignorant of the values the poor villager pays exhorbitant prices for almost worthless articles. He also buys whatever he sees since everything so well displayed attract him. He squanders the hard earnings saved for months.

Those who bring the village wares and products are deceived by cunning traders who barter worthless trifles for valuable goods. The villager is always suspicious of the townsfolk. He is very careful of his women as many are lured into disreputable institutions. He can be easily won over by sweet words and an appeal to his vanity.

The administration of the country depends on law and order. The Police and Judiciary enforce the law and see that order is maintained

1. Record crowds visited Colombo to see the restoration of the Sinhalese Regalia to the nation by H. M. the King through the Duke of Gloucester.

2. From the Vedda's point of view the most inconvenient ways of a town life are living huddled together and having a lavatory attached to a house in the modern manner.

according to the law. The language in which the government is carried out is English. There are civil and other officers to run the machinery of administration. English being the official language the majority are denied direct understanding and dealing owing to illiteracy or ignorance. The English educated, therefore, assume a superiority and an advantage over the rest. English education offers attractions which the national languages can as yet never hope to confer. All knowledge must be gained through English which also remains the chief source of communication with the rest of the world. There is little wonder then that the European cultured and English educated should continue to hold key posts in the services.

The Public Services are now open to the Ceylonese. But the administration chiefly rests with the European officers recruited from England. The interests of the Ceylonese officers are not safeguarded to the same maximum degree as those of Europeans. There is thus suspicion and discontent. The few Ceylonese that have got to the top help to continue the European personnel as they feel their prestige is enhanced by having them as assistants. The prevalent practice is to recruit Europeans on contract and then give them continued employment in some department or other. It is well known among the Ceylonese that less able, less qualified, and less trained men are employed who, if they were Ceylonese would not have a look in. Whatever mistake the European officer commits the Ceylonese prefer him to the Ceylonese who condone their actions. The European also is at an advantage in the discharge of official duties as each one offers mutual help and entertains direct access where a Ceylonese would have many official channels to cross. With all such difficulties the Ceylonese have done well. Today only the Civil Service and the Police still continue a fifty-fifty basis of European and Ceylonese. Some of these European officers get in by open competition whilst others are nominated. The latter, of course, are naturally more snobbish than the former as they must maintain and show an intellectual and administrative standard they rarely possess.

The administrative machinery set up by the Britisher has, at a superficial glance, been functioning smoothly for over 50 years. Nevertheless, it is only in the last decade that many of the larger departments have been fully geared to fulfil the tasks of natural development. A bird's-eye view of some of these departments will show the why and wherefore of such maladjustment.

The agricultural department has up to now done very little to improve the indigenous methods. The scientific knowledge if there was any was

confined to the laboratory and official designation. It never came within practical realisation of the agriculturist. The people continued in the same old way. The forest department did not up to now worry much about afforestation. It has been responsible for conserving the silvan wealth without adding to it. The past indiscriminate destruction of forests has helped desiccation and waste.

The irrigation systems, which even today remain the pride of the Sinhalese, suffered continuous neglect without attention and improvement. The tanks that supplied water to millions of acres are stagnant pools that breed the malarial mosquito.

But so long as the destinies of the department remained in the hands of the European hierarchy little progress was made. A bold progressive policy had to await the appointment of a Ceylonese Minister who has truly inaugurated a new era of agricultural regeneration.

The mineral resources of the Island remained unexplored except for the gems. Ancient methods of mining were practised. The metals had to be obtained from Europe. The question may be asked and is being asked today whether this attitude of mind was the dictated policy of colonial administration for retarding progress. The future will tell.

Law is professed by proctors and advocates specially trained in the law and art of arguing. These may be responsible for a great deal of litigation in so far as the ignorant layman feel that a lawyer can win any case. Many have ruined themselves by two frequent appearances in Courts. The villagers ignorant of the language and the law depend on the lawyers to fight out successfully the case whilst they pay willy nilly. The art of coaching a witness or a client may at times lead to speaking the untruth. The court is the one place avoided by the respectable citizen. Not only has one got to waste one's time but also one may be put to shame even if one were to speak the truth. Village respectability disappears in the face of a sharp cross-examination. Consequently village authority tends to diminish merely as a result of the curt address and undignified treatment the village gentry are subjected to in certain legal circles and the Police atmosphere.

The Ceylon Police, started as a patently punitive force has found it very difficult to rehabilitate itself as a true friend and protector of law-abiding citizens. This is so, specially in regard to the lower classes. To the villager, the Police Constable, is a man to be feared and the Inspector to be dreaded.

Although the Police have in areas brought about law and order

their influence has not always been to the good. Had the force started with a different conception of its legitimate duties more good could have been effected by gaining confidence and trust. Today the chances are very much better for bringing the civilian and policeman to closer and better understanding.

The excisemen have intruded where the policemen have left any room for freedom. As a unit the Excise Department follows closely the model of the Police. The main business of this body is to prevent illicit manufacture and sale of liquor since the Government has the sole monopoly of making alcoholic drinks. Some of the excise laws have been distinctly unfair. The townsmen can have his whisky and soda at the club or a public bar at the most convenient hour and stock it in any quantity. But the poorer classes must drink during specified hours and may stock only two bottles of the popular drink of toddy or arrack. There seem to be neither equity nor sanity in such an act. The amateur toddy drinker had to forego the precious drink for fear of excise raids and the possibility of arrest. The presence of the excisemen and the raids have not lessened the illicit traffic in opium, ganja and other narcotics. Narcotics and drugs are usually indulged in by townsmen although a few old stagers in the villages use opium to relieve rheumatic pains. It is a sad fact that in spite of the Police and Excise crime has considerably increased and illicit traffic in liquor and narcotic drugs continues unabated. Could this be the result of disintegration of society due to colonial administration of over a century.

As in many other parts of the British occupied territories so in Ceylon the missionary activities have been in the forefront of imperial exploitation. The European missionary although attempting to move with the so-called unfortunate natives intent on civilizing them did not for a moment deviate from the accepted European standards in anything. He stuck faithfully to his whisky and soda, trousers and coat, foreign language and above all racial arrogance. He attempted to implant a culture foreign to the people of this soil. The Sinhalese were not only compelled to abandon their ancient culture but were made to feel ashamed of it and despise their own traditions and institutions as primitive and barbarous. The lure of wealth, political threats and professional gains compelled the adoption of a foreign religion under compulsion in the initial stages. Social requirements such as solemnisation of marriage necessitated entry into a church prior to recognised registration of the wedded state. Poverty and dire necessity drove the poorer folk during later stages to embrace Christian faiths. It was not

the church nor force that enabled the missionary to gain a footing and progress. The battle of proselytisation was successfully won in the early established English schools where anybody who was somebody had to study in order to be proficient in English reading, writing and speaking. Buddhism faded into the background as the religion of the poor working classes. The people of the town felt ashamed to admit that they were Buddhists. After nearly 500 years of European subjection in religion and government the Sinhalese have reacted and a movement is gaining momentum in which nationalism is being revived, culture is being recognised and Buddhism is being re-established. A clash is bound to take place. Such is the tendency in all educational, political and social movements.

A country under military occupation requires armed forces to maintain peace and order. Ceylon has been for the last 500 years governed by a Governor appointed by a distant imperial power. He has to be backed by force of arms. The Europeans trained the Sinhalese and other Eastern troops who could be given orders to put down any rebellion or uprising. The European officers and men were always treated differently and better than the others. Contingents of armed forces were posted in distant parts of the country. A soldier respects no person or institution. He cared little for the feelings of the local population. The position became worse when the soldier happened to be a foreigner. The people lived in constant fear and dreaded such armed forces. Their freedom was curtailed and movements were checked.

Men under military discipline, living away from home and relatives, take unnecessary risks. Pleasures of life being denied as a result of restrictions, the soldier will pay whatever he has to fulfil his desire. As the company of women is denied he seeks to spend his secret hours with the women of the locality. Naturally colonies of half-castes[1] grow up in the vicinity of military camps and establishments testifying to the racial strains that composed the military units. The women are not brought to the camps but the men are led into villages by touts who set up a regular business. The lure of wealth and pleasure gives rise to a bad practice of the young girls finding a ready made profession in these plague spots of civilisation. The slightest pretext offers a reasonable excuse to flout parental authority. From an economic point of view the village benefits but at the same time the cost of

1. One of the best known is a place called Little England near Bandarawela where some of the European soldiers in colonial exile spent their leasure hours in secret love and left this fair land leaving behind each at least one whom they would be ashamed to associate with in public.

purchase increases as the armed forces and their dependents can afford to pay higher prices. Such villages acquire a merited notoriety which gradually compels the respectable to avoid or leave them as the morals deteriorate daily.

Under each system of government roads had been constructed and the land had been surveyed according to the administrative requirements. When the whole of Ceylon was taken over by the British more roads became essential so as to facilitate quick locomotion. The alienation of land to British capitalists at nominal rates for the purpose of plantations quickened the pace of communication. Cart and coach were replaced by rail and car. Messenger service was supplanted by postal, telephonic and telegraphic facilities. Radio and the aeroplane will in future take the place of the more older methods of communication whilst the omnibus will become the poor man's conveyance. Whatever motives may be attributed for the introduction of various forms of locomotion the Ceylonese benefited on the whole even admitting the fact that these helped the spread of disease. An irremediable consequence of the system of land alienation during the early British administration is the encirclement of whole villages which suffered total elimination or partial neglect, there being no access to the outside world as the European owned estates lay all around. This phenomenon is noticeable in the upland areas where the village lay at the bottom of the valley. It is therefore not too surprising to find that today in order to visit some of the historic sites permission of a planter has to be obtained. Vakirigala is the best example.

Quick locomotion has had its disadvantages to the individual as well as the community, but when considered with the advantages it can safely be said to have benefited the country. Private individuals have ruined themselves by purchasing private motor cars which they could not even maintain. Social diseases have been introduced to the remotest villages of the Island where Parangi, Syphilis and Gonorrhoea were unknown. Due to the penetration of the bus, lorry and the car indigenous customs and manners, superstitions and folk lore are fast disappearing if not irretrievably lost already. Life is being transformed into a single inferior copy of the European. Migration has been on the increase from the North to the Central and from the South to the Central. Matara, Galle and Jaffna are the chief towns of emigration. The most fruitful large-scale organised source of emigration is South India which supplies indented labour for the rubber and tea plantations. This is a complicated problem by itself. Criminals,

out-castes, low castes, misfits in society, dissatisfied, and runaway youths have found emigration into towns a useful way of forgetting the antecedents and the past.

Public conveyances such as the railway, 'bus and the tram car have helped largely to remove class and caste distinctions. But still the European planter feels he must enjoy the early privileges which were conceded under acts of discriminatory treatment. The spread of new fashions, growth of new words, exchange of ideas, and mutual exchange of speech has been possible by these modes of locomotion. Telephone, telegram, cable and wireless enable easy communication as never dreamt before. But the Sinhalese-speaking masses fail to derive the highest benefit because of the language difficulty. The new inventions are not exploited to the best advantage of the masses, their cultural value not being fully realised by those in authority.

How much of truth there is in the prevalent belief that certain diseases have been introduced by the foreigners the writer cannot say. The European share of this contribution may be at least limited to Parangi, Syphilis and Gonorrhoea whilst the Indian gets credit for Small-pox Cholera and Plague. The incidence owing to the quickness of infection has been increased in these as well as in others. Heart disease, Tuberculosis and Cancer take a heavy toll of life. These may have increased owing to changed habits of life and living. The over-crowded insanitary slums of towns create a suitable background for most of the infectious diseases. Western medical system and drugs have helped to arrest some of these and other diseases. The remedy is quick and easy. Quick communication and fast locomotion have brought medical facilities within easy reach of all alike. The medical service is doing commendable work but it could do a great deal more.

Quick locomotion has helped trade considerably. Foreign wares find a ready market even in the remotest corners of the island. Such a quick distribution has been possible only after the penetration of the bus and lorry into the country. Cheap machine-made products are seen everywhere as a ready market can be found for them. British goods are expensive but considered good. Better still are the German products whilst the Japanese are deemed poorest in quality. Nevertheless owing to their cheapness Japanese goods are preferred. The local arts and crafts cannot compete with cheap foreign wares. The craftsmen are giving up the ancient crafts as their products can scarcely be sold. Local industries spring up but die a natural death in the face of strong foreign competition. Not only are the ancient arts and crafts

neglected without any hope of revival but also the wealth of the country is drained. A casual observation shows an excess of exports over imports, but if it is known that the greater volume of exported commodities is owned by European individuals or companies the position could be understood. The Ceylonese export very little but import practically all the requirements from England and the Empire under the Imperial preference scheme which does not provide a high price in the Empire countries for its exports. Cheap imported wares have taught the Sinhalese peasants to be extravagant and wasteful. The brightly coloured cloths of goregous attractions, the trinkets, glass beads and bangles, torch lights and aluminium ware are purchased when ever he sees them. He earns little but spends it all without any thought of the morrow. Unless a ready market is available trade brings no prosperity. The innate tendency of the Sinhalese to imitate the so-called higher culture of the foreigners creates a ready market for the imported articles of trade. In the clash between two cultures that are diametrically opposed there can be no fusion. The tendency is for the materially weaker to be overwhelmed by the stronger. As the culture of the rulers remains predominant the indigenous has no chance of survival. Out of fear, respect, or imitation the European sense of values has been adapted by the Sinhalese. In manners and customs food and clothing and in play and work the European standards prevail. This blind imitation has been so blindly, so thoughtlessly and so slavishly effected as to induce a psychological state that admits the superiority of the white man in derived qualities. The superiority of material culture leads to the admission of his superiority as a race physically and mentally. The superior attitude of the white man in his colonies is a pose. The inferiority complex of colonial races is a mental predisposition arising out of a sense of defeatism induced by years of subjection under a foreign system of government by people of a different race, social organisation and culture. Thus every trait of fashion and complex of his culture are followed in detail. All the good and the bad aspects of the foreign culture are accepted by all alike. No regard is paid to health, custom or suitability. Nothing must stand in the way of acceptance.

One of the many noticeable culture traits is dress. The Sinhalese had adopted many forms of dress to suit the tropical climate. But these gave place to the trousers and coat although other forms of national dress find revival or introduction from time to time. The women adopted the jacket and skirt at the commencement of the

European impact but abandoned that for the Indian saree which is one of the most charming forms of dress in the world. However, the trousers continued with the added qualification of respectability.[1] There arose a class known as the "trousered gentlemen." With trousers followed English speech. The inability of a trousered gentleman to speak English was a thing unheard of. The trousers and coat meant collar and tie, socks and shoes which by themselves seemed ridiculous appendages in tropical countries. People went to inordinate lengths when suits were made of thick warm material or began to don European dinner suits with even tails and top hats, gloves and spats. Then came European music, song and drama which seemed the only art manifestations that the Sinhalese appreciated. Of recent years a new Indian influence has captured the imagination of the Sinhalese. Tagore and his school of Santiniketan have been solely responsible for the music and song whilst Uday Shankar and Menaka for the dance. Still the majority prefer to say they enjoy European art either owing to ignorance of the Indian or shame of admission.

Forms of gambling were known to the Ceylonese, but the Europeans introduced mass gambling which has ruined the poor in the country. Cards and races are the worst forms. Racing is the worst of all in so far as one can gamble without visiting a course or seeing a horse run. By placing bets with book-makers or investing monies at the course money can be won or lost. The gambling instinct can be satisfied without participation. The organisation of lotteries is also an attempt to cater to the gambling instincts. All the ruinous phases of gambling have manifested themselves with the appearance of Europeans. These have brought ruin, loss, unhappiness and waste in their train.

Foreign liquor of various grades of alcoholic strength and diverse tastes came into the island with the arrival of the Europeans. The indigenous drinks were toddy and arrack of unpleasant odour and taste. Foreign drinks were deemed more superior and fashionable, easy to purchase and convenient to stock. The European drank whisky and soda. So the Ceylonese followed as the inevitable fashion of drinking, not because of any thirst but as the fashion increased with the organisation of society on European models as the inevitable concomitant of gambling, racing and enjoying. Club-life was incomplete without a bar where all manner of liquor was stocked for distribution to the members some of whom drank until late in the night.

1. The Sinhalese call any person who wears a pair of trousers, whoever he may be, a *Mahatmaya* meaning a gentleman who was also presumed to be able to speak English.

The European started the club life and gave the idea which the Ceylonese adopted. At first these were spots where men met together for games. Later these became gambling and drinking places. Some at least were visited by women with varied interests. Clubs were founded on a national basis of a communal description such as European, Sinhalese, Tamil, Malay, Moor, Burgher and even Dutch-Burgher. The Ceylonese clubs enforced no discrimination but some European clubs enforced a colour bar. The most exclusive Ceylonese club takes pride in inviting Europeans to theirs. Such a racial discrimination and prejudice against Asiatics generally prevail in every walk of life in the island. The mercantile firms which are predominantly European cater chiefly to their own interests whilst the Ceylonese patrons are tolerated. There is difference of treatment of every turn with each business transaction. Some Fort firms did go to the extent of having separate waiting rooms for the Europeans whilst there was none made available to the Ceylonese. In hotels too there was such a distinction but the difference does not stretch so far as total exclusiveness. An attempt was made by the early planting communities in the uplands to introduce this colour complexion into first-class carriages of railway compartments by adopting obstruction tactics or forcefully driving away Ceylonese. The practice is noticeable still on rare occasions. Things have changed and the Ceylonese are asserting themselves more and more. With a state owned or controlled organisation the people could demand equal rights. But with private business there is no remedy except non-co-operation. That is seldom possible as the association with Europeans has been considered a privilege by some.

There is no colour bar as it prevails in England, America, South Africa and Australia. But the racial prejudice exists as much or even in a lesser degree than it does elsewhere. As far as possible racial discrimination is subtly and privately expressed though not with the same rigour of enforcement. Although there is no exclusive European quarter nominally, Bullers Road, Cinnamon Gardens and Uplands serve as such places where Ceylonese presence is discouraged and obstructed if possible. These are some of the visible manifestations of the clash between European and Sinhalese culture. Many more instances could be cited. There remain weightier, more powerful, subtler influences that react in a variety of ways usually to the detriment of the Sinhalese pride in their customsand history. Foremost amongst them is the sense of defeatism,

psychological inertia, feeling of helplessness that must inevitably result from five hundred years of European occupation.[1] Wherever one goes whatever one does, or sees, one cannot help feeling the greatness of the European as he is nowhere found in an inferior position. His buildings, and his ships overpower him. His empire stirs up wonder at its prosperity and immensity. The thought of being ruled by them enhances their prestige and adds to their power. Fear is instilled into the heart of the Sinhalese. The treatment meted out by them is one of deliberate inferiority. He lives in luxury, comfort, and plenty. Is it then any wonder that he should be deemed superior and privileged. He finds it easier to gain access where Ceylonese would be not admitted to. A kind word from him appears kinder than from another. Despite all these humiliations and discriminations, the majority prefer his rule and him to any other.

But at present a change is being witnessed. The transition has been precipitated by the war. The reactions of five hundred years of foreign administration, social organisation, religious proselytisation and a century of English education have produced repercussions in the Sinhalese society. This period has witnessed the rise and fall of foreign rulers, fluctuation of family fortunes, growth of the class struggle, communal and religious conflicts, waning of individual European authority and Ceylonisation. The economic, political and social reforms in other countries have been followed at least by the educated intelligent classes. The Ceylonese have had a meagre share of the benefits. The enfranchisement of women with the granting of universal franchise helped to remove barriers of feminine progress. Freedom has been in the air. The conviction of unfair treatment of coloured races and imperial exploitation of colonies found proof. Travels in foreign countries widened the outlook. The liberty of the subject and rights of man were being recognised in all free countries. The Ceylonese also began to dream of a future, enjoyment of freedom and revival of national consciousness. They realised that as a subject race it was not worth living because of the ignominious treatment meted out to them at home and elsewhere. They also felt a pride in their culture, history and race as the others did. Such thoughts were confirmed during periods of sojourn in foreign lands. On return home the position is realised in its true perspective. The injustice of the whole thing begins to react and leads to a mental conflcit and a physical contempt for the European and his culture. The spirit of nationalism is engendered and develops.

1. S. Radhakrishnan—G. Birdwood Memorial Lecture. 1937. "The Britisher who comes to India thinks he understands it because he has conquerred India . . . ."

Such is the true position today. The Ceylonese are beginning to find their true self. Some at least are unselfishly attempting to develop it in a free atmosphere. The bitter memories of the past sufferings generate sufficient courageous energy which if wisely directed must lead to a national regeneration. Various critical stages of the long struggle have been passed. The Ceylonese have witnessed their subjection by military conquest and assimilation of an alien culture. They are now witnessing their own reaction and conflict. The psychological forces behind such a movement are tremendous and ere long will be translated into a physical conflict unless the alien and the national find an honourable basis of agreement for a satisfactory solution. Nationalism must bring about freedom or chaos. Our position cannot be more aptly described than by a modern folk song[1] which says :

" All our virtuous customs have been cast aside. All that was good has been spoilt by Westerners. All that is bad in us and in the foreigner has been accepted as good by us. We have become a laughing stock to the world around us."

1. *Ape honda sirith okkoma epa una*
Batahira danangen honda de narak una
Pita rata merata wal de apata honda una
Hathara hinawaki loketa apa dakina

අපේ හොඳ සිරිත් ඔක්කොම එපා උනා
බටහිර දනන්ගෙන් හොඳ දේ නරක් උනා
පිට රට මෙරට වල් දේ අපට හොඳ උනා
හතර හිනාවකි ලෝකෙට අප ද කිනා

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